

BING

**Winter
2009**



No. 153



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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Bing Crosby Internet Museum: www.mcckc.edu/~crosby **Bing Crosby Enterprises:** www.BingCrosby.com

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- (a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
- (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

Season's Greetings to all my fellow ICC members. As the year 2009 draws to a close, it's incredible to realize that we've already made it through the first decade of the 21st century. Knowing that, it's even more amazing to note that this club will be beginning its ninth decade of existence, and starting its 74th consecutive year as an organization in 2010. This means the ICC has been around for the entire span of Bing's life!

During this time of peace on earth and goodwill, let each of us do what we can to promote that spirit of unity and camaraderie, of co-operation and compromise among all members of this organization. We all share a common bond; enjoyment, respect and admiration for the talents of one Harry Lillis Crosby. None of us whose names appear on the opposite page from the one you're currently reading receive any compensation for what we do. We're all volunteers, and we're all equals. We do what we do as a labor of love to keep the name "Bing Crosby" in the forefront of entertainment where it belongs. In that spirit of goodwill and camaraderie, I'd encourage each member to make a point of contacting one or more of your ICC representatives or contributors in the upcoming year. We're here to serve you and to work with you to make the International Club Crosby the finest organization it can be. Your ideas and input are greatly appreciated!

There are several fine new products available that would make great Christmas gifts. Volume 4 of "Through The Years", the series of CD's on the Sepia label chronicling Bing's commercial recording output for US Decca in the early 1950's is now available. The beloved seasonal classic *White Christmas* celebrates its 55th anniversary with a two DVD release from Paramount Home Entertainment. It's loaded with all new bonus featurettes on the second DVD. Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, has a new book available titled "Bing: On The Road To Elko", which covers Bing's life as owner and operator of a large cattle ranch in Elko, Nevada between 1943 and 1958. Jim Kukura gives us a review in Books 'N' Bing.

Before I turn things over to Malcolm, I'd like to send my best wishes to longtime ICC member and contributor Bert Bishop, who, sadly, stepped down as a regular contributor with issue No. 152. His valuable input and expertise will be sorely missed within these pages. And now, to all of you, a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2010.

Greg Van Beek

As this edition of the magazine was being prepared we had exciting news about a wonderful new 7-CD box-set from Mosaic which will be available as you are reading



this. This is a marvellous new issue which has come about thanks to Bing Crosby Enterprises and their Vice President of Marketing and Production - Robert S. Bader – who is a real enthusiast and who has many ideas for marketing Bing's music. Mr. Bader has kindly written an article for us giving the background to this new box-set and I am sure you will find this to be fascinating reading. This box-set will have a comprehensive booklet with session by session notes written by Gary Giddins. All in all, it is a most prestigious item which we shall all like to have if we can afford it. It is a limited edition with only 20,000 copies being pressed.

Greg Van Beek told us about an article about Bing in the July 2009 issue of *Cowboys & Indians* magazine and the magazine has kindly given us permission to reproduce this for our readers. Our usual contributors continue to find new subjects to entertain us with Greg Van Beek and Martin McQuade digging up little known facts about other facets of Bing's life. Bob Halls sends an in-depth report on the Leeds meeting which again seemed to be appreciated by those present. Keith Parkinson looks at *Say One For Me* and Gord Atkinson recalls his meetings with Tony Bennett. Ron Bosley continues to provide photographs to illustrate the articles and I don't know what I would do without him! His knowledge about photos of Bing is truly phenomenal.

However, as usual, there's plenty for you to read and I must delay you no longer. Best wishes for the holidays!

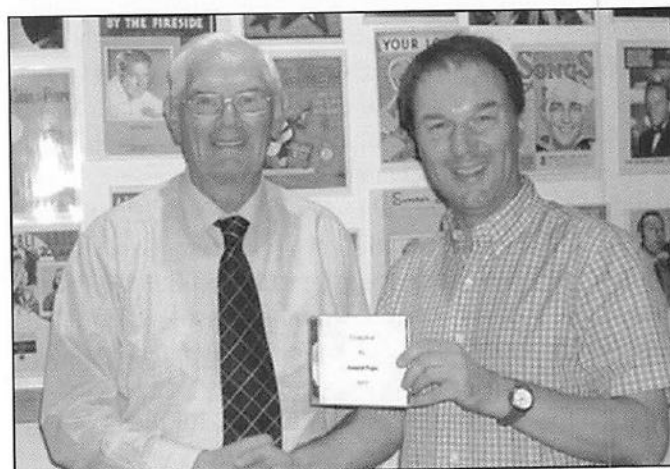
Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Arnold Pope, a friend of your secretary for nigh on 50 years died on the 1st of August 2009. Arnold was a lifelong Crosby admirer and he tested all the guests at the Leeds event with his yearly quiz and it was very strange to be without him after his 43 attendances at our annual dinner/meeting. I will miss his friendly company and once again a knowledgeable and lifelong Crosby enthusiast has left us.



Arnold Pope (left) presents Ken Crossland with the prize for the 2007 quiz.

Having paid our respects to Arnold and another great Crosby collector, Charlie Tupper at Leeds, the 2009 programme excelled with a presentation by our industrious editor Malcolm Macfarlane. Bob Halls has the detail later on in this issue but here I would like to commend Malcolm for his technical skill and enthusiasm in bringing Bing to the big screen at Leeds and to thank the new attendees from the USA, Australia, Sweden and Germany for their encouraging support.

Leeds 2010 will be our 45th meeting.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members to the ICC and we trust that through their membership they will gain friends and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Bing's unsurpassed career.

SPAIN

Francisco Franch (Palma de Mallorca)

BELGIUM

Pierre de Bie (Beveren)

UNITED KINGDOM

Rod Owen (Cornwood, Devon)

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support provided by the following members.

Edward Broadley, George O'Reilly, Jim Watt, Hazel Nunn, Margaret Otway, Harry C Ross, Bill England, Malcolm Macfarlane, Alf Stead, Nicholas Morrison, Doreen C Hubbard.

DEATHS

With sadness we draw your attention to the passing of the following members.

Arnold Pope (Whitefield, Manchester), Charles Huck (Warrenville, Illinois), Frank Rodgers (Yountville, California), Harold Maruca (Gibsonia, Penn.), Jerry Hall (Andalusia, Alabama), John Gill (New York, New York), Brad Graham (Madison, Wisconsin), Steve Palmer (Chicago, Illinois), Alan Graser (Statten Island, New York), John Sarrow (Johnston, Rhode Island).

Arnold Pope, as indicated above, was a lifelong friend of your secretary and I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to his widow Lilian who attended Leeds with Arnold on at least 40 occasions. Sincere too are our thoughts for the families and friends of our late US members listed above.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS

- 1, 2, 3 & 4 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £6.50 and the price for Europe being £7.00. Members in the USA and Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins. The price for

members in the rest of the world is £8. Volume 5 in this important series will be available in May 2010 and you will be able to order this by returning the form supplied in the spring edition of the magazine.

CROSBY CALENDAR 2010

Ron Bosley has produced another attractive calendar, featuring a mix of superb black and white photographs. The calendar is available from me at £6.50 UK and £7.00 for other European destinations. US/Canadian members should contact Wig to obtain their calendars. Rest of the world should order from me at £8

LEEDS 2010

Sunday, October 3rd 2010 is the date for your diary.

My kindest regards to all members.

Michael Crampton

The Bing Crosby-Buddy Cole CBS Radio Recordings (1954–1961)

Robert S. Bader, the producer of the wonderful new Mosaic 7-CD set, gives us the background to the release.

The task of restoring Bing Crosby's voluminous library of recordings with Buddy Cole and His Trio and preparing them for release turned out to be more of a research project than anyone involved realized it would be. Even the most ardent and intrepid chroniclers of the Crosby legacy are at a loss when it comes to the details about this wonderful material recorded for three CBS radio programs. Speculation, guess work and inaccuracy have been the order of the day and it seemed that any solid information on these recordings was not likely to surface.

But when Bing began recording masters that he and not a record company would own he also managed to understand the need to take good care of the material. Among the first recordings Bing made for his own production company were the CBS radio recordings with Buddy Cole and His Trio. So while Universal Music Group, the keeper of Crosby's Decca catalog may have lost numerous masters in a fire, mostly because the protection masters were foolishly shelved right next to the originals, Bing's own master tapes, including the CBS radio recordings, have quietly resided in the temperature controlled environment of the basement of his Hillsborough, California home. Not surprisingly, Bing had the best people working for him, so the basement also contains reams of incredibly well organized documentation about his recording sessions and the production of the radio shows. But that wasn't immediately apparent. Through the gracious cooperation of Kathryn Crosby I had the unique opportunity to

liberate these half-century old tapes – and all of the precious information about them - from the basement in Hillsborough.

The process began with a decision by the Crosby family to preserve the tapes of the 550 episodes of *The Bing Crosby Show*, the fifteen minute daily radio program that Bing made for CBS from 1954 to 1956. Several boxes of the masters had suffered moisture damage due to an air conditioner leak and mold had formed on them. The restoration and transfer process for the shows is ongoing and to date more than 400 of them have been successfully restored and digitally preserved. The sound quality of the tapes was a revelation and the decision was made to organize the music recorded for the shows and release it.

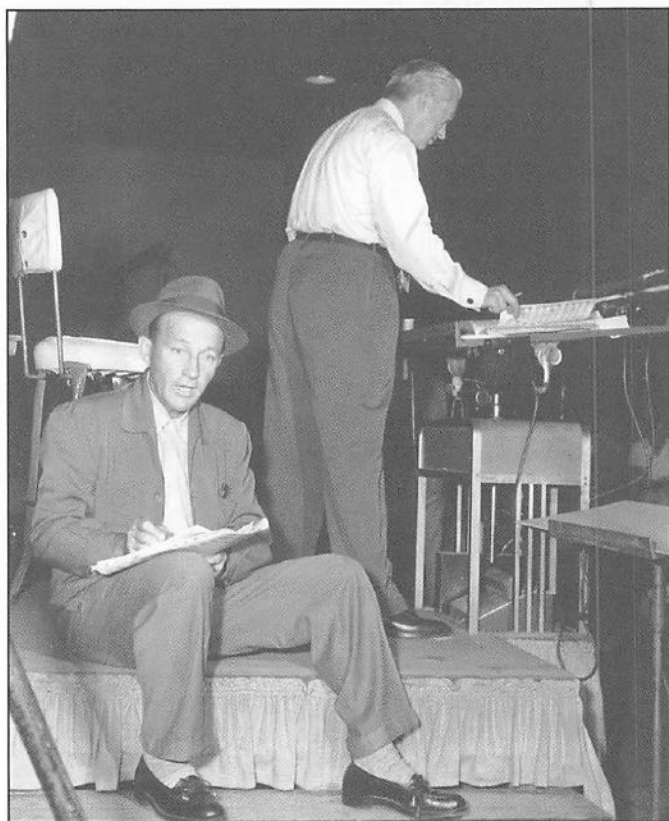
But information about the recordings was difficult to come by. When and where exactly were the songs recorded? How many songs were recorded? Not being a Crosby expert I naively began to ask a few Crosby aficionados about these sessions, expecting chapter and verse with every bit of minutiae imaginable. But I was surprised to learn that this was one of the few black holes in the amazingly well documented recording career of Bing Crosby. There are lists of songs compiled by collectors who've listened to whatever episodes of the show are extant. But those lists tend to include the songs that Bing recorded with Buddy Cole for the two other CBS radio shows that followed *The Bing Crosby Show*. More confusion also comes as a result of the fact that the songs recorded for *The Bing Crosby Show* were also used on *The Ford Road Show* and *The Crosby-Clooney Show*. I needed to know which songs were recorded for the 550 episodes of *The Bing Crosby Show* and no one could tell me.

I began by going through the shows as they were transferred, checking off songs on the largest list of Crosby – Cole collaborations I could find as they surfaced on the show masters. Fortunately the songs were each broadcast in numerous episodes of the show, which enabled me to cut together multiple airings of a song to remove spoken introductions mixed over the music or clipped endings when necessary to create a clean master. This was a slow process and a release of the material did not seem imminent. But then there was an exciting breakthrough.

In cataloging and organizing the tapes in Bing's archive I stumbled upon a few very old binders in an area away from the tapes. These well worn binders contained a meticulous history of the production of the daily fifteen minute radio show and a lot of information about the two shows that followed it. These production files revealed that somewhere in Bing's archives there should be 31 tapes simply labeled as "Music Holds". These tapes, according to the paper trail left by Bing's producers Bill Morrow and Murdo MacKenzie would contain all of the masters of the tracks recorded by Bing and Buddy Cole and His Trio for all three of the CBS

radio programs.

If I could find these tapes I would no longer need to piece together clean versions of the songs from the show masters and the quality of every song would be improved by one generation. It's a large basement but I was determined not to come up to ground level until I found those 31 tapes. Some were exactly where they seemed to belong, some were across the room with other unrelated material and some were hidden behind boxes of other tapes and stacks of film. But two hours after learning the value of the "Music Holds" reels, I had found them all. Some were in better condition than others but they all appeared to be quite usable considering their advanced age.



The transfer and restoration of the "Music Holds" tapes began a few days later and if the sound quality of the show masters was revelatory the fidelity of the music masters could only be described as stunning. And there was also the added surprise of several hitherto unknown rejected alternate takes on the reels. The tapes also reveal things about the production process. Several of Bing's spoken introductions, for example, were actually recorded in the studio with Buddy and the group. The futility of my search through hundreds of episodes of the show hoping to discover clean introductions for those songs was suddenly explained.

The usual recording process involved Bing cutting his spoken segments for several shows at a single session wherever he happened to be. Morrow and MacKenzie would then edit the shows together, using a combination of the latest Crosby – Cole recordings, Bing's commercial recordings and older tracks from the

Crosby – Cole library. Bing recorded many of the spoken pieces of the show in his dressing room at Paramount. But many were also recorded during vacation trips to Hayden Lake, Idaho and Palm Springs, California. Some were recorded at Bing's house and in one instance Bing even recorded portions of the show from a hospital bed in Santa Monica, California. The music sessions also tended to occur wherever Bing was. Although most of the sessions took place at the CBS Studio in Hollywood, California, several sessions occurred in other parts of the state, like San Francisco, Monterey and Palm Springs. There were even a couple of sessions in Spokane, Washington.

At the sessions Bing and Buddy and the group would often record several takes of a song quickly and move on to the next song without necessarily getting a perfect take. The producer and editor would later take Bing's lyric sheet and make markings on it noting the portions of the song that would be pulled from each take. The editor would cut the original session tape and splice a perfect master together from the best parts of each take.

Fifty year old splicing tape, for those who haven't attempted to run it through a tape machine, falls right off the tape. Many of the masters for these songs were on the reels in pieces and had to be reassembled.

Fortunately many of the songs were single takes that required no editing. Others were composites dubbed onto the master reels. Composites are spliced masters augmented with overdubs – usually an additional keyboard part by Buddy Cole or an added Vince Terri guitar solo. In these cases the spliced master was recorded onto a new piece of tape along with the overdubs. And now that this issue of splicing has been raised I can assure the people who are wondering that, so far, none of the unused pieces of tape that didn't end up in the final masters have been found. In all likelihood those unused portions of the various takes were discarded. Five rejected takes, however were saved on the master reels although they were never used in any of the broadcasts.

The complete master library for the three CBS radio shows consists of 253 selections. 185 were recorded for *The Bing Crosby Show* between November 1954 and August 1956. An additional 27 tracks were cut in 1957 for *The Ford Road Show*, which was a five minute program. The length of that show required the songs to be rather brief and as a result many edited short versions of the masters were created. Several of the songs cut for *The Bing Crosby Show* were edited into shorter versions during the production of that show for greater flexibility in editing the shows. But when *The Ford Road Show* began, many additional songs from the library were cut down to size. Bing and Rosemary Clooney also recorded eight duets for *The Ford Road Show* in 1958. For *The Crosby-Clooney Show* they recorded an additional 18 duets in 1960. (Four of them are medleys, each

consisting of several songs. While many previous lists might count a four song medley as four selections, I will follow the documentation of the show's producers and count each medley as a single master.) Additionally, Bing recorded some new solo masters for *The Crosby-Clooney Show* – nine in 1960 and six in 1961. A handful of duets from this show also underwent the editing treatment, making a total of 113 shortened edited versions of the masters from the three shows. So, in a purely technical sense there are actually 366 masters in the Crosby-Cole library.

As a confessed non-expert when it comes to Bing Crosby I will leave any detailed discussion of the music to those more qualified. But I will say that as a fan of Bing's I've always enjoyed *Some Fine Old Chestnuts*, *Bing With A Beat* and *Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings* more than any of his other albums. And I also appreciate the genius of Bing's work with Paul Whiteman. So hearing Bing in a small jazz group setting performing so many songs I had not otherwise heard him sing has been an enlightening and joyous experience, the end result of which is the release of 160 of the tracks recorded for *The Bing Crosby Show* on a new seven CD collection from Mosaic Records. (Note that the remaining 25 masters from *The Bing Crosby Show* sessions will be released in other collections for various reasons. For example, one of the 16 recording sessions was eliminated from the Mosaic set simply because it was not a full band session and only featured Bing and Buddy Cole's organ accompaniment. The rejected alternate takes were also held back for a future release as were Bing's duets with his son Lindsay.)

The Mosaic set is not only essential for anyone interested in Bing Crosby, but also for anyone interested in jazz. You can't find a jazz singer who wasn't influenced by Bing Crosby, either directly or through someone else who was. Well, here are 160 examples of that incredible artistry, the large majority of which has never before been available. And if you think you've heard this material you really haven't. The fidelity far surpasses any extant copies of the songs that might be floating around. And for fans familiar with versions of some of these songs that were edited and overdubbed with orchestrations shortly after Bing's death, the listening experience is a completely different one. Whichever side of the posthumous overdubbing argument you favor, the simple fact is that the original tapes contain incredibly well crafted small jazz group performances that Bing Crosby, his musicians and his production team considered to be finished goods. There's no substitute for hearing the music as the artist intended it to be.

The process of resurrecting these tapes has been a costly and time consuming one, which is ongoing and will soon bring forth further treasures from Bing's basement. I'm indebted to a small but dedicated group of people whose assistance has greatly enhanced the

quality of the project. Mark Brodka, Richard Kaplan, Howard Green, Judy Schmid, Martin McQuade and Michael Cuscuna have all played significant roles in bringing this music to the public. I'm honored to have been given the opportunity to do this important work by Kathryn and the rest of the Crosby family. I'm sure that Bing's fans will be appreciative and supportive of the family's efforts in this exciting initiative and that they will be well served by it. And of course the best possible result would be a whole new generation of music lovers hearing these superb and unique performances.

Robert S. Bader

(Editor: Robert S. Bader is the Vice President of Marketing and Production for Bing Crosby Enterprises. He has produced numerous archival home entertainment products featuring such artists as Groucho Marx, John Lennon, Dick Cavett, Jackie Gleason, Ray Charles and Johnny Carson. He is also the writer and producer of the Warner Bros. feature documentary The Dawn Of Sound: How Movies Learned To Talk.)

Robert has given us full details of the songs recorded for "The Bing Crosby Show" and we'll give this information in the next issue. For the time being, the sessions from which the songs for the forthcoming CD set were taken are shown below.

Session A was recorded on November 18, 1954, CBS Studio C, Hollywood, CA

Session B was recorded on December 4, 1954, CBS Studio B, Hollywood, CA

Session C was recorded on March 2, 1955, CBS Studio B, Hollywood, CA

Session D was recorded on April 6, 1955, CBS Studio C, Hollywood, CA

Session E was recorded on June 9, 1955, CBS Studio C, Hollywood, CA

Session F was recorded on June 20, 1955, KCBS Studio A, San Francisco, CA

Session G was recorded on August 25, 1955, Sound Recording Studios, Spokane, WA

Session H was recorded on August 26, 1955, Sound Recording Studios, Spokane, WA

Session I was recorded on December 29, 1955, CBS Studio C, Hollywood, CA

Session J was recorded on March 8, 1956, CBS Studio B, Hollywood, CA

Session K was recorded on March 14, 1956, CBS Studio C, Hollywood, CA

Session L was recorded on April 4, 1956, Palm Springs, CA

Session M was recorded on June 18, 1956, CBS Studio B, Hollywood, CA

Session N was recorded on August 22, 1956, Sound Recording Studios, Spokane, WA

Session O was recorded on August 23, 1956, Sound Recording Studios, Spokane, WA

If all has gone to plan, you should receive a copy of the Mosaic catalogue with this issue but just in case, here are the details of this exciting new release.

**THE BING CROSBY CBS RADIO RECORDINGS
1954-56 - MOSAIC MD7-245**

DISC ONE

1. If I Give My Heart To You (session A) 3:23
2. Mandy (A) 1:39
3. Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep (A) 2:52
4. I'm A Fool To Care (A) 2:52
5. Hey There (A) 3:04
6. Anyone Can Fall In Love (A) 2:56
7. I Need You Now (A) 3:06
8. I Want To Be Happy (A) 1:48
9. Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now (A) 2:06
10. But Not For Me (A) 2:20
11. Honeysuckle Rose (A) 2:25
12. The Nearness Of You (A) 2:06
13. Ain't Misbehavin' (A) 2:12
14. Just You, Just Me (A) 2:08
15. Once In A While (A) 3:39
16. You Took Advantage Of Me (A) 2:29
17. Ol' Man River (A) 2:18
18. Thou Swell (B) 1:46
19. 'S Wonderful (B) 1:46
20. Oh, Look At Me Now (B) 1:30
21. I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm (B) 2:32
22. All Through The Night (B) 2:58
23. Taking A Chance On Love (B) 2:01

DISC TWO

1. We're In The Money (The Golddiggers' Song) (B) 1:39
2. This Can't Be Love (B) 1:28
3. I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me (B) 1:24
4. Love Is The Sweetest Thing (B) 2:01
5. Back In Your Own Backyard (B) 2:13
6. I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan (B) 2:30
7. Don't Take Your Love From Me (B) 2:55
8. You're In Kentucky Sure As You're Born (B) 1:57
9. Young and Foolish (C) 3:05
10. My Own True Love (Tara's Theme) (C) 3:02
11. Sunday (C) 1:42
12. That's All I Want From You (C) 2:22
13. Unsuspecting Heart (C) 3:07
14. A Man Chases A Girl (C) 2:56
15. Melody Of Love (C) 1:23
16. Darling, Je Vous Aime, Beaucoup (C) 3:11
17. How Important Can It Be? (C) 2:17
18. I Hear Music (D) 1:38
19. As Long As I Live (D) 2:13
20. Try A Little Tenderness (D) 3:33
21. What Is There To Say? (D) 2:38
22. Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White (D) 2:36
23. Danger! Heartbreak Ahead (D) 3:26

DISC THREE

1. In A Little Spanish Town (E) 2:12
2. It's A Most Unusual Day (E) 1:55
3. Unchained Melody (E) 2:46
4. Something's Gotta Give (E) 1:59
5. I Belong To You (E) 3:07
6. Keep It Gay (E) 1:44
7. Just A Baby's Prayer At Twilight (E) 3:18
8. You Do Something To Me (E) 1:24
9. Nice Work If You Can Get It (F) 1:47

10. How Long Has This Been Going On? (F) 2:44
11. 'Deed I Do (F) 1:58
12. Cocktails For Two (F) 3:00
13. Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea (F) 1:59
14. How Am I To Know? (F) 2:48
15. I Get A Kick Out Of You (F) 2:26
16. I See Your Face Before Me (F) 2:51
17. The Lady Is A Tramp (F) 2:00
18. I'm Yours (F) 3:16
19. Get Happy (F) 2:15
20. My Ideal (F) 3:03
21. Gypsy In My Soul (F) 2:05
22. That's The Way Love Goes (F) 2:02

DISC FOUR

1. I'll Never Say "Never Again" Again (G) 1:59
2. It's All Right With Me (G) 3:46
3. Serenade In The Night (G) 3:34
4. Wake The Town And Tell The People (G) 2:29
5. She's Funny That Way (G) 3:31
6. If I May (G) 2:46
7. Domani (Tomorrow) (G) 2:30
8. I'll Never Stop Loving You (G) 3:04
9. Goodnight, Sweet Dreams, Mary Lou (G) 2:55
10. Love Me Or Leave Me (G) 2:20
11. (You Gotta Have) Heart (G) 2:35
12. Swanee (G) 2:03
13. Shhh In Madrid (G) 2:25
14. Avalon (H) 1:40
15. Blue Star (The Medic Theme) (H) 2:54
16. Love Is A Many Splendored Thing (H) 2:59
17. The Tender Trap (I) 3:07
18. My Blue Heaven (I) 2:20
19. What Is This Thing Called Love? (I) 2:19
20. When I Take My Sugar To Tea (I) 2:57
21. Someone You Love (I) 3:21
22. Avalon Town (I) 2:08
23. There Should Be Rules (I) 2:48

DISC FIVE

1. New Sun In The Sky (I) 1:39
2. Love And Marriage (I) 2:20
3. Merci Beaucoup (I) 2:30
4. Way Down Yonder In New Orleans (J) 1:47
5. Waitin' For the Evening Mail (J) 2:35
6. Isle Of Capri (J) 2:54
7. I Feel A Song Comin' On (J) 1:21
8. You're The Top (J) 2:30
9. Breezin' Along With The Breeze (J) 2:07
10. Anything Goes (J) 1:55
11. Manhattan (J) 2:32
12. From This Moment On (J) 1:53
13. Yours (J) 2:56
14. We'll Be Together Again (J) 2:46
15. My Funny Valentine (J) 3:31
16. Jeannine, I Dream Of Lilac Time (J) 3:05
17. Carolina In The Morning (J) 2:11
18. Crazy Rhythm (K) 2:08
19. You Turned The Tables On Me (K) 2:24
20. That Old Black Magic (K) 2:16
21. Arrivederci Roma (K) 2:30
22. No, Not Much (K) 2:55
23. On The Alamo (K) 2:52

DISC SIX

1. Come Rain Or Come Shine (K) 3:30
2. If You Can Dream (K) 3:18
3. I Can't Get Started (K) 3:14
4. Little Man, You've Had a Busy Day (K) 2:46
5. I've Got A Crush On You (K) 2:07
6. Margie (L) 2:32
7. Yes Sir! That's My Baby (L) 2:44
8. The Object Of My Affection (L) 2:56
9. Sometimes I'm Happy (L) 2:08
10. When My Baby Smiles At Me (L) 2:00
11. I Got Rhythm (L) 2:01
12. Just Around The Corner (L) 3:35
13. Strike Up the Band (L) 2:03
14. Muskrat Ramble (L) 2:17
15. That's A-Plenty (L) 1:57
16. At The Jazz Band Ball (L) 2:15
17. Smiles (L) 2:11
18. I'd Climb The Highest Mountain (L) 2:14
19. My Baby Just Cares For Me (L) 2:35
20. Fine And Dandy (M) 1:44
21. Georgia On My Mind (M) 3:19
22. Alabamy Bound (M) 1:52
23. When The Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along (M) 2:03

DISC SEVEN

1. You're Driving Me Crazy (M) 2:52
2. On The Street Where You Live (M) 2:30
3. If I Could Be With You (One Hour Tonight) (M) 2:16
4. I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face (M) 2:41
5. Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise (M) 3:21
6. Too Marvelous For Words (M) 2:31
7. Moonglow (Theme From Picnic) (M) 3:16
8. Chinatown, My Chinatown (N) 1:37
9. I Wish You Love (N) 3:01
10. Lullaby Of Broadway (N) 2:43
11. I Almost Lost My Mind (N) 2:53
12. You're Sensational (N) 3:19
13. Then I'll Be Happy (N) 2:28
14. Don't Blame Me (N) 3:36
15. My Heart Stood Still (N) 3:12
16. L'Amour, Toujours, L'Amour (Love Everlasting) (N) 2:03
17. Button Up Your Overcoat (N) 1:49
18. Chicago (O) 2:02
19. Get Me To The Church On Time (O) 2:21
20. More Than You Know (O) 2:32
21. Cheek To Cheek (O) 2:00
22. I'm Confessin' That I Love You (O) 3:41
23. They Didn't Believe Me (O) 2:55

On all sessions:

Buddy Cole - piano, organ, celeste, harpsichord
Vince Terri - guitar, banjo
Don Whitaker - bass
Nick Fatool - drums, percussion

On session L, add:

Matty Matlock - clarinet
Fred Falensby - tenor sax
Clyde Hurley - trumpet
Abe Lincoln - trombone

Disc 1, tracks 11 & 17, Disc 3, track 1 and Disc 4, track 12 were originally issued on *Some Fine Old Chestnuts* (Decca DL 8374) in 1956.

Disc 3, track 13, Disc 4, tracks 14 & 20, Disc 5, track 23, Disc 6, track 21 and Disc 7, tracks 1, 3, 5, 8, 18 and 22 were originally issued on *New Tricks* (Decca DL 8575) in 1957.

Disc 7, track 20 was originally issued on *Rare Style* (Ace Of Hearts AH-164) in 1967.

All other tracks are previously unissued.

Michael Cuscuna, President of Mosaic Records wrote to Crosby fan Kevin Roberts about the set and his letter was reproduced on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum site.

"I've always appreciated Bing Crosby. I appreciate how he revolutionized pop singing. Without Crosby, there'd be no Sinatra, Eckstine or Bennett. I appreciate his relaxed, pitch-perfect style and enjoy his jazz-oriented albums like "Bing with a Beat" and "Bing & Satchmo."

So when Robert S. Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises came by Mosaic one day with the idea that Mosaic would be the perfect vehicle to release a mountain of previously unreleased studio recordings by Bing with Buddy Cole & His Trio made for Crosby's 1954-56 CBS radio program, I was very interested. The idea of tapping into uncompromising material without commercial trappings by great singers who've experienced great success has always intrigued me. It led me to explore and release Capitol transcription sessions by Nat Cole, June Christy and Peggy Lee.

To me, Bing Crosby recording great songs he'd never recorded by the likes of Cole Porter, Fats Waller and the Gershwins with just a quartet backing was too enticing to ignore. But I was unprepared for what I experienced a week later when Bader sent me CDRs of all the material to review and choose from. I took them home on a Friday night. The following morning, I popped in the first CD. It started with fare in keeping with Crosby's pop success like Irving Berlin's "Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep" but I was drawn into the real genius of Crosby - his immaculate pitch and his relaxed but deliberate phrasing with the lyric. Clearly, this man didn't take his gift lightly; he worked at his art. Before long, he was digging into jazz favorites like "I Want To Be Happy" and "Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now" and I was hooked, mesmerized by his artistry and command.

After a massive dose of Bing Crosby, I got it! My appreciation turned to awe.

Enjoy,

Michael Cuscuna"

Gary Giddins has written the liner notes and here's an excerpt.

"Like buried treasure reclaimed from the past, this remarkable set is like no other Bing Crosby collection ever released. Here is the great crooner and a quartet led

by his longtime accompanist Buddy Cole, occasionally augmented by a few wind instruments, in a thesaurus of 160 songs recorded in the most informal of circumstances at 15 sessions, during a period (1954-56) when Bing was in exceptionally good voice.



Buddy Cole accompanies Bing on a TV show in 1954

Most of these performances haven't been heard on records at all, except by ardent collectors; many tracks will be new even to them—the audio quality will be a happy surprise to all. The masters have been safely kept these many years in the majestic Crosby home in Hillsborough, CA, by Bing's widow, Kathryn Crosby, and are now collected for the first time by Mosaic in participation with the Bing Crosby Estate. It is a bounty to be savored.

Here in full flower is the tensile suppleness, the canny informality of the Crosby voice, which Louis Armstrong memorably described as "a mellow quality ... like gold being poured out of a cup." Freely roaming through an anthology of mostly first-class tunes, he shapes and finesses the melodies, detailing each phrase, finding import in each lyric. You can hear the pleasure he takes in his vocal equipment, in low notes that shimmer like deep waters, in his occasional use of the upper mordent—a technique of turning a note on its heel that Crosby had made his signature in the early 1930s, and then largely abandoned in the intervening years. One reason he felt so comfortable is that his accompanists suited him to a golf tee. Some backings are so tight and responsive they sound as though they had been rehearsed over many days.

For many of us, Bing's jazz-themed albums of the 1950s have long stood out as defining moments in an outstanding window of time when Bing seemed on the

verge of luminous renewal as a recording artist...This set increases the mid-50s Crosby trove exponentially. More than half a century has passed, but this is an inheritance that was well worth waiting for."

Gary Giddins, edited from liner notes

The set will sell for \$119 plus postage (\$12 in the USA, \$15 to Canada, International \$30). It would make a wonderful Christmas present!

Order Online or by phone from:

Mosaic Records

35 Melrose Place

Stamford, CT USA 06902-7533

Tel: 203.327.7111 (9-5 EST Mon-Fri)

Fax: 203.323.3526

Email: info@mosaicrecords.com

Web site: www.mosaicrecords.com/

At the Leeds meeting, members asked whether the ICC would be placing a bulk order to save on postage costs for UK, Ireland and EU members. We should be very pleased to do so. However we cannot be certain of the final cost and it may come out like this:

US \$119 at say 1.59 (this will fluctuate) = £74.45

To this must be added shipping costs from the USA, UK import duty and UK postage. We could therefore be looking at £90 or more. If members are prepared to commit to buying at whatever the final price may be, please send a cheque for £50 payable to the International Club Crosby as a deposit to Michael Crampton as soon as possible.

Ken Crossland will give us a full review of the set in the next issue when he has had chance to hear it.

But, for now, there's still more about this new CD set as Martin McQuade describes some of his research for the project.

An Embarrassment of Riches

Recently a most gratifying and stimulating assignment came my way. A request was made by Robert Bader, vice president of marketing and production for Bing Crosby Enterprises, to assist with the preparation and research for a project for which we owe the Crosby family an enormous debt of gratitude: the comprehensive and orderly release of the extensive radio recordings which Bing Crosby made with Buddy Cole and his trio.

This unique contribution to the Crosby canon has been nurtured by Robert's hallmark meticulousness and dedication. Robert regularly consulted me when certain questions would arise as he reviewed the logs of the first order of business: *The Bing Crosby Show* (1954-56), the source for the forthcoming Mosaic box set. Sometimes answers were readily offered; but many mysteries remained about this vast uncharted territory. An

illuminating quest unfolded as Robert gathered and assimilated massive amounts of documentation and restored a wealth of source material unearthed from the Crosby archive.

What a tremendous bonanza of information has been uncovered! The breakdowns of hundreds of individual episodes, replete with descriptions of even Crosby's daily commentaries and reflections, are finally known; as well as the recording dates and locales of the titles which were expressly recorded for the fifteen minute series, accurately counted at 185 songs, of which 160 are now being released.

Many discoveries were made. Among these were an alternate take of *I Can't Get Started*; two takes of a hitherto undocumented performance with Lindsay Crosby of *Big D*; and, most pleasing to these ears, a previously unknown gangbusters recording of *Sometimes I'm Happy* with the augmented Dixieland group.

My participation grew once Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic's founder and president, commissioned an essay for the book which will accompany the release. This chronicles the media revolution which Crosby spearheaded with his visionary endorsement of magnetic tape - a watershed which made the series feasible in the first place. Michael also called upon me to prepare thumbnail biographies of Cole and the personnel of his combo: drummer Nick Fatool, guitarist Vince Terri, and bassist Don Whitaker. Conversations with several colleagues yielded much information and valuable insights. These reflections naturally shed light on Crosby himself.

My first contact was jazz composer and arranger Clare Fischer, who enlisted Terri on one of his famous recordings, *Jazz for a Rainy Afternoon*. Clare put me in touch with the prominent woodwinds artist Gary Foster. Gary holds Crosby in very high regard. He played during the dress rehearsal of *Bing - a 50th Anniversary Gala* which was broadcast on CBS. He recalled the concern which the star and the production crew expressed that afternoon over the erratic stagecraft which resulted in the devastating fall Crosby would suffer later after the actual taping.

Gary, in turn, directed me to Bob Bain, one of the most in-demand studio guitarists of the day. Bob was helpful particularly in filling in the blanks in both Terri's and Whitaker's profiles. He was also generous with his reminiscences of Crosby. He remembered working with him at Decca, once on a session which he described as Nelson Riddle's first conducting chore at the studio. The discographies state that Riddle was never credited on a Crosby Decca side, although he did arrange the last two songs which Crosby would record with Brother Bob at the studio: *That's How Much I Love You* and *Rose of Santa Rosa* in 1946. Could Riddle have been a pinch-hitter for Bob Crosby on that date? Bob, whose recall is quite precise, has certainly raised that possibility.

Indeed, it was Bob Bain who introduced Riddle to Bob Crosby, triggering a most creative collaboration.

He also hinted at a falling out, sometime in the late fifties, between Crosby and his perennial guitarist Perry Botkin, whom Terri succeeded in the trio. Bob again crossed paths with Crosby in his capacity as lead guitar player for *The Tonight Show* band, a position he held for seventeen years. He was present for Crosby's two appearances on that show.

Bob expressed his abiding admiration. *Bing was one of the best singers - way ahead of his time. His scat singing was extraordinary. He had a wonderful approach to singing and could do it all: upbeats, ballads, duets. I particularly like his early thirties recordings, especially with Eddie Lang. He was a dream to work with because he didn't insist on many takes and didn't keep you for long hours in the studio. That's like money in the bank to a musician.*

Bob shared an enlightening anecdote which conductor Jack Marshall relayed to him. When Marshall was recording with Gary Crosby at Capitol, he noticed the young singer's father monitoring the session from the booth. He said very little but listened intently, after which he quietly left. His reaction was inscrutable, but this reveals quite an active interest in his son's career.

Clare Fischer further advanced my knowledge by facilitating a talk with Ralph Carmichael, the renowned conductor, arranger, and choral director. While at Capitol, Ralph was in charge of many performances made by the studio's top talent. On October 21, 1963 he oversaw a session at which Bing Crosby made his most popular recording of the decade: *Do You Hear What I Hear*. (The recording must certainly be one of Crosby's million sellers, having appeared in myriad manifestations, but is never accredited as such). It is most fitting that Ralph would have been involved, considering his huge reputation in the field of religious music and his devotion to spiritual matters. The song, written by the team of Regney and Shayne, was intended as a call to peace in response to the angst - ridden aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Ralph's inspirational treatment added tremendously to its success. He explained the genesis of that date.

I had worked with Buddy Cole on the Bing Crosby special with Mahalia Jackson in 1958. Buddy Cole was the musical director for that show and I was choral director. We got along very well. When Buddy heard a few years later that Bing needed someone to conduct and arrange for a planned Christmas recording at Capitol, he recommended me for the job.

Ralph confirmed that flutist Paul Horn is prominently featured on *Do You Hear What I Hear* (see *A Peace Advocate of a Different Color*, Bing #152, p.14). He also settled a long brewing mystery. It is indeed Louie Jean Norman of Jud Conlon's Rhythmairs who has the featured passage on the flip side as *the lady who cooked the feast*, namely *Christmas*

Dinner Country Style. Ralph considers Norman the top soprano of her era.

Ralph again had the pleasure of working with Crosby when he served as musical director for the annual gala balls held by The Thaliens. This is a charitable organization, co-founded by Debbie Reynolds, which is devoted to children's mental health problems. Each year the Thaliens designate a Mr. or Mrs. Wonderful. One memorable evening the award was given in triplicate.

This report is derived from The Thaliens' website. *In 1976 we honored not one, not two, BUT three Hollywood legends. And there's nothing quite as legendary as Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour and Bob Hope! Since this was our Bicentennial Ball, we even had John Wayne presenting the awards. Bing sang, Bob joked. The funniest moments were when Dottie was trying to get her lines in with Bing and Bob jumping in and out stepping on her lines, just like in their movies. Super star singer Peggy Lee fascinated the Gala attendees with her timeless beauty and profound talent.*



Ralph echoed the others in his esteem for Crosby. *Bing was one of the kindest, gentlest, and most thoughtful human beings. Some singers you are afraid of. Some you respect. Some are in it just for the money. Bing was a prince. When he sang praises, it was masterful. He was one of the finest gentlemen I have ever known.*

These cozy virtuosos made it clear that Bing Crosby was in exceptionally fine hands as he embarked on the

final stage of his radio career. Mosaic's release of this treasury is an answered prayer; one which should dispense with the preposterous notion that Crosby neglected many of the classic American standards. The cognoscenti may finally marvel at the restored brilliance of yet another golden era of this maestro's art; while casual fans and newcomers, it is hoped, will be overwhelmed by an embarrassment of riches.

Martin McQuade

Bing Crosby's Estate Says UMG Swiped Songs for Ring Tones

An article by Karina Brown of the Courthouse News Service caught our attention in September.

LOS ANGELES – Universal Music Group (UMG) Recordings has been selling Bing Crosby tunes as cell phone ring tones without permission for 4 years, according to singer's estate. Crosby's 1943 contract with Decca records is attached to the Superior Court complaint. It promised him 2 to 4 cents royalties for each "shellac" record sold, plus \$1,000 a week.

After Crosby died in 1977, his widow assigned his music, movie and publicity rights to HLC Properties. Crosby's given name was Harry Lillis Crosby Jr.

UMG never approached HLC about a digital downloading deal, according to the Superior Court complaint. The parties never agreed to a royalty rate that would apply to ring tones.

UMG unilaterally applied the record royalty rate to digital downloads, the estate says. UMG also is accused of using Crosby's name and picture without permission to sell the ring tones.

Crosby signed his last recording contract with UMG's predecessor, Decca Records, in 1943. The contract, attached to the lawsuit, promised Crosby \$1,000 a week for 7 years; Crosby had to record 36 to 40 songs per year.

The contract promised royalties of 2 to 4 cents for each "shellac" record sold.

The contract did not allow Decca to produce Crosby's music using technology other than shellac records, the lawsuit claims. And it did not cover "any future discovered media," according to the complaint.

Crosby's "White Christmas" is the top-selling single of all time, according to the 2008 Guinness Book of World Records. Michael Jackson's "Thriller" was the highest-selling album until The Eagles "Greatest Hits" edged it out in 2000.

Karina Brown

A Concert for Frank, Louis & Bing

Advance publicity for this concert by The London Society Orchestra with singers at the National Concert Hall in Dublin, Ireland on September 20 was

encouraging. The press release said:

A spellbinding new production and a unique entertainment extravaganza recapturing an era both brilliant and wonderful featuring golden classics such as "*What A Wonderful World*", "*Pennies From Heaven*", "*That Old Black Magic*", "*Jeepers Creepers*", "*New York New York*", "*I'll Be Seeing You*", "*My Funny Valentine*", "*Sweet Georgia Brown*" and many more all time favourites.

Elegance and style are embellished with charm and grace in the golden classics from **Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra & Bing Crosby**. Celebrate the best songs and music from their world-renowned melodies, along with other soothing instrumental gems. Bring along your best voice and be happy to the tips of your toes with the London Society Orchestra & Singers.

The orchestra was led by Chris Dean who is also the leader of the Syd Lawrence Orchestra. Our own **George O'Reilly** went to the trouble of procuring a letter from Kathryn Crosby in which she said how much Bing enjoyed working with Frank and Louis. The promoter of the concert was delighted to have this and gave it to Chris Dean to read out during the concert. George naturally attended the concert and he commented that whilst Chris Dean's singing of the Sinatra songs was good, the singing of the two band members putting over the Bing and Satchmo hits was disappointing. Also Irish audiences are tired of hearing visitors sing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" and "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" and when the Orchestra and singers performed them there was almost a groan from those present.

Afterwards, George had a few words with Chris Dean and expressed his disappointment about Kathryn Crosby's letter not being used and also the poor standard of singing. He was told to "F*** off!" Amazing. Sadly, it would seem advisable to avoid this concert should it show up in your locality.

Clambake Oldsmobiles: One Great Drive After Another

Greg Van Beek takes a new look at a Bing association.

As we all know, Bing pioneered the celebrity golf pro-am championship, dubbed the "Crosby clambake", beginning in 1937 in Rancho Santa Fe, CA. In 1947, he moved the annual tournament to the Monterey Peninsula and the Pebble Beach golf links, where it continues on to this day as the AT & T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Beginning in 1959, the Oldsmobile division of General Motors became the one of the official sponsors of the tournament, after Bing had signed a contract to do a series of TV variety specials for them. Oldsmobile

remained a sponsor of the tournament until the mid 1980's, save for 1965, when Mercury took over due to their sponsorship of Bing's short lived "Bing Crosby Show" sit-com on ABC-tv that year. Oldsmobile supplied brand new cars each year to be used as courtesy vehicles during the tournament, and Bing could often be seen cruising around Pebble Beach in one of them.

Beginning with the 1959 models and continuing on until the mid 1970's, Oldsmobile, in conjunction with JoHan models, began producing special 1/24th scale plastic promotional model cars with advertising for the Crosby Pro-Am emblazoned on top of the roof of each car. Generic Oldsmobile promotional model cars in themselves are getting hard to find. These limited Crosby editions are even more scarce, as they were only available around the Monterey Bay area at local Oldsmobile dealers, or at the tournament itself. I have a particular fondness for one model in the Oldsmobile line-up beginning in 1966, the Toronado, as my grandparents traded for a new model just about every year from 1973-84. The Toronado was the first front wheel drive car in America since the Cord 810 in the thirties. Bing can be seen driving a front wheel drive Cord in his film *Paris Honeymoon* in 1939. There were a number of Crosby Toronado promotional models produced between 1966 and 1972. I've seen a 1966 and a 1968 on eBay, and I recall the 1968 fetched over \$300!! Oddly, the Oldsmobile Cutlass, not the new and revolutionary Toronado, was used as the courtesy car during the 1966 tournament.

I have a dark red metallic 1971 Toronado, advertising that if a participant in the Crosby Pro-Am that year got a hole in one on the 17th hole, he would win a brand new Toronado! Not a bad deal for a skilled golfer. A photo of Bing posing with this coveted prize appeared in the official souvenir program for the 30th anniversary of the tournament in January 1971.

I also own a 1963 Oldsmobile Starfire two-door hardtop which simply has Bing's photo on the roof, along with a 1974 Oldsmobile Cutlass, which is one of the last Olds promotional models. Oldsmobile stopped producing these model cars in 1976.

There was always Oldsmobile advertising in the official programs for the Crosby tournaments each year. I have a pairings and starting times pamphlet from the 1973 tourney, and it features a great color advertisement for the 1973 Toronado with the caption "one great drive after another"!

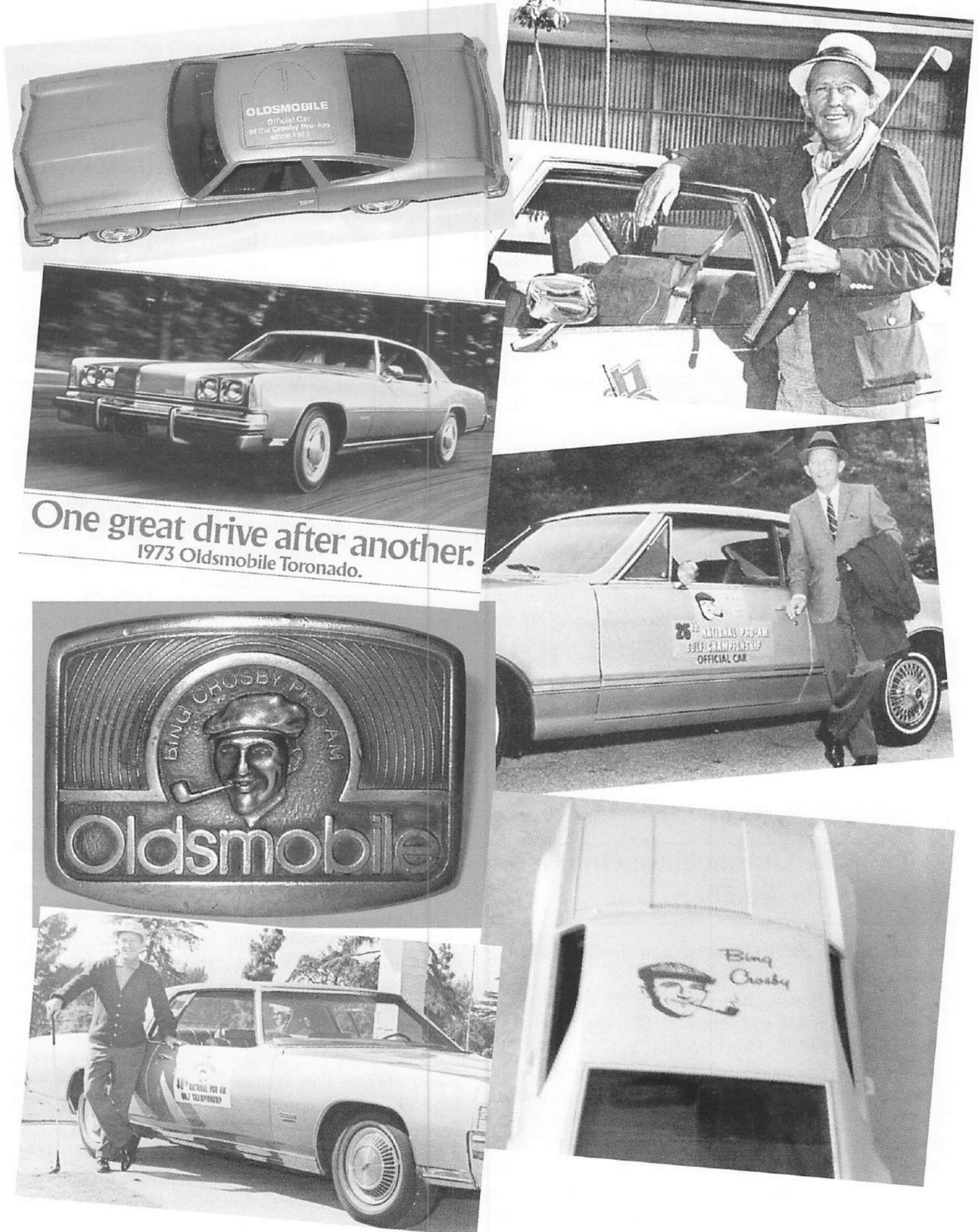
Bing remained associated with Oldsmobile right up to his death in 1977, fittingly, after completing a round of golf. He posed for a photo with a 1977 Oldsmobile 98 Regency Brougham two-door courtesy car in January of that year for what turned out to be his final appearance at the tournament that bore his name for the previous 36 years. The car has an adhesive-backed placard attached to the driver's side door promoting Oldsmobile as the official car. I have one of these placards in new, unused

condition.

A crushing blow to the auto industry in the U.S. came in April, 2004, when the final Oldsmobile rolled off the assembly line in Detroit, Michigan after an incredible 107 years in production. Hopefully the photos

and illustrations accompanying this piece will bring back memories of these great, reliable cars, and Bing's long association with them.

Greg Van Beek



Mentions of Bing

Greg continues...

Recently, I met up with two gentlemen who both have fleeting connections with Bing. Neither of them ever met Bing, yet both had good things to say about him.

The first was singer B J Thomas, who is best known for performing the Oscar-winning song "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head" in the 1969 film *Butch Cassidy & The Sundance Kid*. Bing, evidently, was a fan of the song. Though he never made a commercial recording of it, he did perform it on his 1970 TV special *Cooling It*, during a scene in which he portrays a boxcar hobo. More significantly, when Bing appeared on the BBC radio program *Desert Island Discs* in December of 1975, he chose Thomas' record of the song as one of his favorites. High praise indeed, since Bing was given free reign on this program to play whichever records he considered amongst his favorites. The songs ranged from Nat King Cole's "Too Young", Louis Armstrong's "Sleepy Time Down South", Tommy Dorsey's "Song of India", Artie Shaw's "Begin The Beguine", and others. When I mentioned this to B J Thomas, he replied, "Boy I love hearing that. I did not know Bing was a fan. I worked with Bob Hope many times but never met Bing."

The other was actor Anson Williams, who is best known for playing "Potsie" on the popular 1970's TV sitcom *Happy Days*. Anson has a more concrete connection to Bing, and was, in fact, to have met him before unfortunate circumstances intervened. Anson was one of the celebrity guests on Bing's ill-fated 50th Anniversary TV special in March of 1977. It was at the conclusion of this concert special that Bing suffered a terrible 25 foot drop from the stage, resulting in a severe back injury from which he never fully recovered. Anson, along with Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, Martha Raye and Sandy Duncan, were each shown seated in the audience as Bing performed "Mary Lou" from the stage. Their pre-recorded voices were heard as Bing was singing, supposedly indicating what each of them were thinking watching this master at work. It was cleverly written by Ray Charles, who had penned the similarly self-deprecating "If I Could Read Your Mind" for Perry Como some years earlier. Some of the comments spoken about Bing include "I wonder if he helps around the house?", "Bet he doesn't take the garbage out", "Do you think he ever helps the kids with their homework?" "Probably has a staff of ten".

Here's what Anson had to say about that memorable night; "I remember the show very well. Bob Hope did the opening, 72 at the time. I was honored to be part of it. All of us were supposed to meet Bing after the show, but his fall cancelled everything. I was beyond shocked and numbed by the turn of events. Bing was great that night, a magical evening until the fall. Never did get to

meet him in person."

My thanks to both of these gentlemen for taking the time to comment on Bing for the benefit of our members.

Greg Van Beek

How The West Was Crooned: remembering the cowboy in Bing

As Greg Van Beek mentioned in our last issue, the July 2009 issue of *Cowboys & Indians magazine*, featured a lengthy article by Jordan Rane on Bing's country legacy. The article was accompanied by some lovely photos and it's worth picking up the issue just for those. The Editor of the magazine has kindly agreed to us reproducing the text here.

It couldn't have been a worse moment to suddenly forget the words to "Home on the Range"—or to suffer the only known bout of stage fright in a peerless musical career that would span six decades. But, as always, Bing Crosby rose to the occasion, albeit a sad and unexpected one this time.

It was August 16, 1935, and the nation's favorite baritone was lounging over drinks with friends at the Arrowhead nightclub in Saratoga Springs, New York, when news of Will Rogers' death—in a fatal plane crash in Alaska the evening of August 15—hit the airwaves. NBC radio tracked Crosby down.

"They were putting together a memorial program — picking people from all over who could do things in tribute to Will Rogers," Crosby would later recall in an interview. "And they wanted me to sing 'Home on the Range.'"

Reportedly, it was Will Rogers' favorite song, not to mention President Franklin Roosevelt's and a good portion of the country's. In no small measure, this had been Bing Crosby's doing. His mellifluous 1933 recording of the tune had in short order, according to biographer Gary Giddins, "turned a little-known saddle song into the most renowned western anthem of all time."

NBC asked Bing if he could sing it for them on the spot. What better comfort to millions of fans of the late Will Rogers than the most popular voice in America eulogizing him with Rogers' favorite cowboy song?

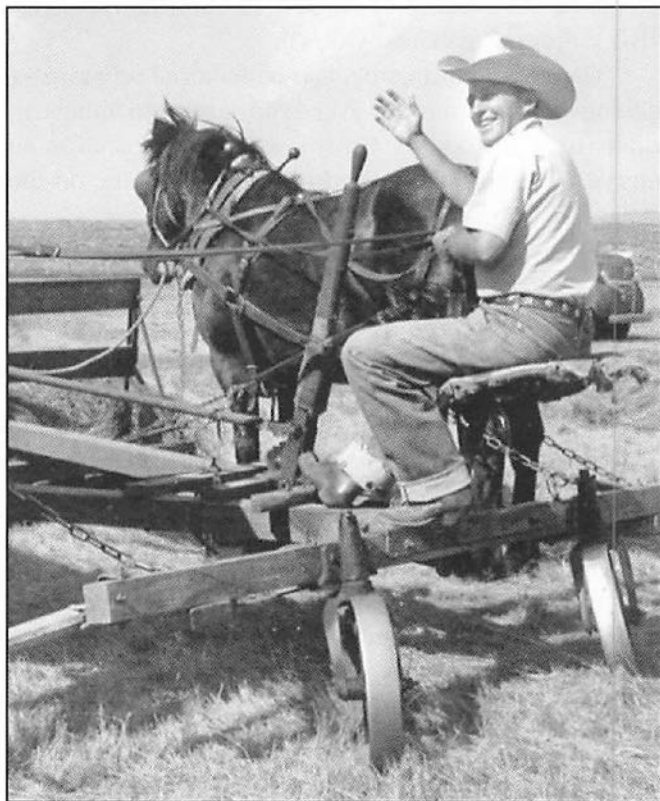
"I was a little shaky, from the sauce and from the realization that it was a solemn occasion, and it was a song he dearly loved, and they thought it should be used, and I couldn't remember the words," said Crosby, who suddenly found himself crooning, "Oh give me a hooommme..." into a mic without a lead sheet or the slightest clue what came next. "My palms were wet, my brow was damp ... I sang the first line, thinking, what the hell is the second line? And it came, and then, what's the third line? And it came. And it kept coming, kept

coming, until I was finished. And I was really finished then. I went home and lay down.”

Bing nailed it that day as always. Of course he did. We’re talking about Bing Crosby, the longest-running radio star in history. The velvet voice behind the most popular record ever (“White Christmas”) and the all-time leader of No. 1 hits on the charts (38)—by far. We’re talking about the mentor of Sinatra and the yardstick of all crooners. The five-time No. 1 movie box-office draw, the Oscar-winning face of Father O’Malley, and the honoree of the world’s longest-running fan club (according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*), which is still going strong 32 years after the man’s passing.

Bing Crosby was and is all that. And it’s worth repeating, lest we forget, he’s also the guy who gave the American West its own anthem. A voice who did more for country music, it turns out, than a hundred Achy Breaky Hearts.

It’s not quite so obvious these days as it once was: Bing Crosby’s melodious ties to American cowboy culture are many and strong. Roy Rogers, yes. Gene Autry, sure. Kenny Chesney, all right, fine. But Bing Crosby? Huge and perennial as this musical giant’s voice may be around holiday season, its vast influence on country-Western music may be as nearly forgotten today as the words to “Home on the Range” were on August 16, 1935.



Bing at work on his Elko ranch.

“It’s hard to think of any current musician with the same level of across-the-board appeal that Bing Crosby had during the 1930s and ’40s,” says Don Cusic,

professor of music business at Belmont University and a board member of the Western Music Association Hall of Fame, where Crosby (who died in 1977) was finally inducted last year. “And so, when he sang a country or Western song—and he had a batch of them on the charts during his career—they would reach a huge audience all over the place. That’s Crosby’s real contribution to the genre, I think. He didn’t exactly define it the way singing cowboys like Rogers and Autry and Tex Ritter did, but he gave it a boost and a respectability on an even larger scale. He took all those classic cowboy songs into the mainstream, to places where they couldn’t go on their own.”

Bing Crosby’s classic cowboy songs? Which ones were those again? No, not “June in January” or “Pennies from Heaven.” Not “Going My Way” or “Jingle Bells.” To truly appreciate the man’s oft-overlooked country side, you have to dig below the mountain of avuncular Christmas specials, Minute Maid commercials, Bob Hope “Road” movies, and celebrity golf tournaments that would be associated more closely with his name in his later career.

They’re scattered in a pile of 2,000-plus recordings Crosby churned out between 1926 and 1977—primarily during the earlier phases. These were gems that largely belonged to a generation of easy-listeners who didn’t know Elvis or The Beatles quite yet but who dug Bing Crosby’s flawless renderings of “Empty Saddles” (while seated atop a white stallion like the Lone Ranger) and “I’m an Old Cowhand” in the 1936 blockbuster *Rhythm on the Range*. Or his ad-libbing classic “Pistol Packin’ Mama” and million-selling “Don’t Fence Me In,” performed with the Andrews Sisters in the early 1940s. Or his seminal recording of “You Are My Sunshine”—a favorite song of Winston Churchill’s during WWII. Or, of course, that eternal anthem “Home on the Range”—recorded more than 75 years ago. Bing’s cowboy image may have faded since these tunes first wooed American ears from coast to coast, but they’re still very much with us if you know where to look.

“Today’s casual Crosby listener will be surprised at how much country music he recorded and the impact he would have on future stars in this genre, including Merle Haggard, who cited him as an influence, as did Eddy Arnold and Willie Nelson, among others,” says Greg Van Beek, co-editor of *BING* magazine and a member of International Club Crosby, the vocalist’s 73-year-old fan club.

“At the height of his career, it was actually pretty well-known that Bing embraced the cowboy life,” Van Beek says. “He had that ranch up in Elko, Nevada, where he took his family every summer. And he loved horses and fishing and the simple life as much as someone who was that famous could find it. But from a purely musical standpoint, I don’t think it’s a stretch to say that most country singers who’ve come along since Bing Crosby are indebted to him, whether they know it

or not. He can be credited to a large degree for country music's widespread popularity back then. And you can still hear his influence everywhere today."

Jordan Rane

(Editor: The same issue of Cowboys & Indians magazine also contained an interview with Mary Crosby by Jordan Rane and we shall reproduce this in our next issue. For further information about Cowboys & Indians magazine, go to www.cowboysindians.com.)

Bing And The Crosby

Sports Illustrated of January 23, 1961 carried an article by Alfred Wright about Bing's golf pro-am. With the Pebble Beach tournament likely to be in the news early in the New Year, we thought it might be nice to read of a time when Bing was still running the show.

In 23 years the National Pro-Am has become one of the country's distinguished golfing events. For its 24th the Crosby's creator looks over a color album of his tournament and reminisces fondly about its past

The cold sits heavy in the ground in a great part of the country, but not in California. There the crack of the driver is heard in the land. While businessmen skip out early for an hour or two on the practice tee, the touring pros, most of them still working the kinks out of their winter swings and the hesitations out of their putters, are moving north from the Los Angeles and San Diego opens toward the Monterey Peninsula. So is the rest of the golfing fraternity. For the third weekend of January brings the "Crosby Clambake," or what is now officially called the National Pro-Amateur Golf Championship.

The Crosby, as almost everybody now recognizes, ranks with the Masters in April and the Open in June, each in its own way the most distinguished golfing event on the American sporting calendar. It is played at Pebble Beach, a spectacularly verdant seaside resort about 100 miles south of San Francisco.

Almost always, the Crosby brings with it the year's foulest weather. This was prophetically so when Bing Crosby started the tournament 24 years ago as a two-day pro-amateur golfing party for his friends. At the time Crosby owned a place near Rancho Santa Fe, a bucolic golfing spot between Los Angeles and San Diego. The rain was so bad the first day that roads and bridges were washed out (Richard Arlen, the actor, forded a swollen stream on foot to get there). After a couple of hours there was such a puddle on the first tee that a flock of mallards mistook it for a lake and landed. Eventually Crosby decided to postpone the tournament for the day, and those who could muster shotguns went duck hunting. The next day the sun came out and young Sam Snead became the winner of the first Crosby.

In the years since, the Crosby has grown in stature

and importance (in 1958 it went on the air as a nationwide TV show, with Crosby himself as M.C.), but it has never lost the spirit that motivated that first day's play. Hardly anyone is now alive who isn't familiar with the casual friendliness Crosby has managed to pass along to his golf tournament despite the fact that it is now a major four-day sports classic with a total purse of \$50,000. Last week as Crosby sat in the living-room of his house in Beverly Hills he reminisced about some of the highlights of previous Crosbys.

"They had a great, great golf course at Rancho Santa Fe when we started," he recalled. "There was a free weekend on the tour then, so I thought it would be fun to get a bunch of pros and some of the top amateurs together for a couple of days of golf. That first time we had 78 pros and 78 amateurs, some of the real good amateurs around here like Johnny Dawson and Roger Kelly.

"There was one time a few years back when it must have rained as hard as you've ever seen it," he went on. "That was the year Jimmy Demaret won, and on this particular day we'd given him an early starting time so he could do a show with me for the Army over at Fort Ord. Jimmy had had a pretty good round under the circumstances, a 75 I think. Well, it went on raining so bad they finally phoned me from Fort Ord and asked if they couldn't call the thing off for the day. Demaret was standing-there with me, and he said, 'What rain? Why, this is a beautiful day. Down in Texas on a day like this we'd be packing our baskets with sandwiches and getting ready for a picnic in the country.' I just didn't have the heart to call the exhibition off."

Many golfers, Ben Hogan included, have picked the 18th hole at Pebble Beach as the greatest finishing hole on any golf course in America. It doglegs to the left along the shore of Carmel Bay, and it measures 540 yards. Countless times in the 15 years since Crosby moved his tournament to Pebble Beach a pro-amateur twosome has come to this final hole needing just a par for victory, only to drive both their balls into the water. Playing safely to the right is to risk going out of bounds.

One of Crosby's favorite stories about the 18th concerns the time an amateur named Bill Hoelle drove his second shot onto the rocky beach to the left of the fairway. Hoelle took a four-iron out of his bag and banged his next shot 150 yards or so right off the rocks and over the sea wall, onto the green and into the hole for a 3, giving him a net 2 on the hole with the handicap stroke he was allowed.

"Hoelle was working for Minute Maid, a company in which I had an interest at the time," Crosby said with a chuckle. "I was standing on the green when it happened and announcing the incoming players to a crowd of about 20,000. I was feeling pretty good, because the team I'd bought in the Calcutta was leading the tournament until then. But that shot of Hoelle's won the tournament. As he came up to the green I announced

to the crowd, 'The man who just hit that wonderful shot, ladies and gentlemen, was Bill Hoelle, formerly of Minute Maid. From now on he will be selling French fried almonds at Atascadero.'"



Bing and Kathryn shield their eyes from the rarely seen sun as they watch the action at Pebble Beach

For some time now one of the happiest fixtures of the Crosby has been Phil Harris, the former bandleader who is one of Crosby's closest friends. Harris likes to bill himself as playing out of the Jack Daniel's Country Club, but for all his self-deprecating comedy he is a very serviceable 7- or 8-handicap golfer. In 1951 he won the tournament in partnership with Dutch Harrison, thanks to a marvelous 40-foot putt that he sank on the enormous, undulating 17th green at Pebble Beach after Harrison had put his tee shot into the water.

"A few years ago," as Crosby tells it, "Harris was playing with Doug Ford, and it was one of those real windy days. Harris had been all over the course with that big banana ball slice of his. When they came to the 16th Harris had a putt for a 4. Well, you know Ford. He's a man of few words and he likes to play golf quickly. So Harris looks over his putt and then he looks at Ford and asks how he ought to hit it. Ford takes one look and says, 'Just keep it low.'"

In recent years Crosby has had to forego playing in order to ride herd on all the administrative duties he has to supervise during the weekend. But before he quit competing, he almost won the tournament in partnership with Dick Metz. "There's a horrible story connected with that," said the founder with a wince. "Metz and I

were right up there in the lead when we reached the 17th green on the last day. Dick's in the bunker, but I'm on the green with a six-footer for a birdie. If I sink it we'll probably win. So I'm standing up to the ball and giving it all this fancy business with my putter and wagging the club back and forth, and the first thing you know I knock the ball backward about three or four feet. That's one stroke, and naturally I miss the putt coming back, so we lose the tournament."

Even though Crosby has given up competing, his personality still saturates the four days of this delightfully soggy event. For the occasion he opens up the spacious modern house he owns on the border of the 13th fairway of the Pebble Beach course. He usually makes a bachelor weekend of it, inviting half a dozen or so of his friends to stay with him there. During the first three days, before the field is cut to the low 60 pro-amateur teams and the low 60 pros, Crosby follows the play on any of the three extraordinarily lovely courses that meander through the pine and cypress forests and across the sandy expanses of the Monterey Peninsula. With the starting field of the Crosby now grown to 300, each team now plays one round at Pebble Beach, one at Cypress Point Club and one at the Monterey Peninsula Country Club. On the last day the final 60 teams finish up at Pebble Beach.

Crosby not only supervises the selection of those who get the precious bids to his tournament but he also tries to chat at least briefly with every one of the golfers he knows personally. In addition, he tapes radio shows, works in a few parties at the houses of friends in the neighborhood and often does a show for the Fort Ord soldiers. On Sunday night following the final round he gives an enormous steak dinner for all the competitors at which he himself awards the \$50,000 worth of prizes that go to the pros and the hand-wrought silver pitchers and bowls and plates that go to the winning amateurs. That done, Crosby emcees a show that money couldn't buy. Phil Harris gets the laughs started, Jimmy Demaret sings, Lionel Hebert plays his horn, Don Cherry croons, Bob Hope clowns it up and the host himself delivers the kind of melody that made all this possible in the first place.

Year in and year out the Crosby is most likely the wettest, ruggedest golfing test in the country. But the 50,000 people who turn out to watch, and the more than 4,000 amateurs who always apply for the 150 starting places have learned how to overlook the elements. To them the Crosby is winter's real treat.

Alfred Wright

Crooner's Lullaby

It's back!! The mysterious "Crooner's Lullaby" popped up again in sheet music form on Page 52 of BING 152. As noted in earlier issues of BING (#122 and

#123), the song was written by Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston as staffers at Paramount. The studio scheduled it for *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (Fred Reynolds, The Road to Hollywood) but it didn't make the final cut. Bing's only part in that film was a four-minute scene singing "I Wished on the Moon." Indeed, Bing threatened to pull out completely (in an alcoholic argument with Jack Kapp per Gary Giddins' *A Pocketful of Dreams*.) Maybe he forced Paramount to drop "Crooner's Lullaby" from the film.

In any case, the song soon showed up in *Millions in the Air*, a Paramount B picture made just after *Big Broadcast*. My theory was that the producer of the later film grabbed the Crosby disc and stuck it in "Millions" to lend a little class. In the later film it was played as a radio broadcast—no singer named, but various sources supposed it was Bing, the great radio star of the day, particularly in the radio context of the film and the scene. The singing had only one or two Crosby touches. Our Editor played it at the Leeds meeting in 1999 and those present almost unanimously felt it was not Bing singing. Thus, an imitator of some sort, for some reason.

The sheet music released from "Millions" listed the song with two others (non-Coslow-Johnston) but had John Howard and Wendy Barrie on the cover. (Donald B. Stubblebine's *Cinema Sheet Music*.) The "new" cover sketch showing Bing crooning over a baby in a crib doesn't seem to credit either film.

Bing didn't remember the song, but it clearly had some ties to him. Gary Crosby, to whom the song is evidently dedicated, would have been about two when the *Big Broadcast 1936* was made, but the song may have been on the shelf for months. John Newton's list of Paramount studio discs may show when (and if) Bing recorded it.

Could it have been some kind of one-off gift to Bing? Or what? I guess the answer for all of us: Stay tuned.

Bob Achorn

Engelbert Humperdinck remembers meeting Bing Crosby in Hollywood, 1969

Engelbert toured the UK in September and as part of the publicity for this he was featured in the *Telegraph* magazine. We have pleasure in reproducing the article with acknowledgments to the *Daily Telegraph*.

This picture was taken backstage at *The Hollywood Palace*, one of the big American television shows of the 1960s. It was staged at the Hollywood Playhouse, a big old theatre on Vine Street, in Los Angeles. It had a different guest host each week, and on this occasion it was Bing Crosby.

I came out to do my rehearsal and Bing was right in

front of the stage with two of his sons. One of the things that has always stuck in my mind is that they all wore leather-strap watches with the watch on the inside of their wrist.



I started singing my ballad of the time, which was probably the Burt Bacharach song *I'm a Better Man*, and Bing was standing there, 10ft away, with his arms folded, watching me. He had his pipe in his mouth and his trademark trilby. I was pretty nervous because I'd grown up seeing him in those *Road to ...* films with Bob Hope, and, of course, listening to all those great records such as *White Christmas*. So to see him in person was quite incredible. When I finished singing, he took his pipe out of his mouth and said, 'That's some set of pipes you got there, boy.' That was all he said. Quite a compliment though, coming from Bing Crosby.

After I finished rehearsing, I went backstage and met his sons, then Bing. It was the first and only time we ever met. I'd heard that he wasn't very sociable, but I found him to be just like his screen image: the relaxed man next door. We sat down. I asked if we could have this picture taken together.

Before *Release Me* became a worldwide hit in 1967, I had worked for a long time in the working men's clubs. I was struggling. So to suddenly find myself in Los Angeles, mixing with all these major stars such as Bing, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin was a big deal for this little guy from Leicester. At first it was very hard, because I felt

they were so far ahead of me in my trade. But it was a great opportunity to see how these people worked, how they carried themselves and how they went through life. If you're going to steal from somebody, you might as well steal from the best, and that's what I did. I learnt a lot of the tricks of the trade, like how to ad-lib, and the importance of timing. But I also watched the way they behaved offstage. The thing I learnt from them was how not to overstep your mark. Instead of being a bighead and trying to get into the conversation all the time,

you wait your turn.

I've always collected photographs of the people I've been lucky enough to meet and become friends with. For many years I've wanted to find the one of me with Bing, so to finally come across it after 40 years was such a nice experience. It's now going to go on my wall at home with all the rest. They all have a story to tell.

Engelbert Humperdinck
(interview by Douglas McPherson)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of \$3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for \$16.00 US each which includes postage. With the strengthening of the Canadian currency against the US dollar, Canadian purchasers should now pay CAN \$16.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £10 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure. Also, there are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £9.99.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video.

Mrs. B. Lloyd, 10 Plas Terrace, Fleur-de-Lis, Blackwood, Gwent NP12 3RP, UK

FOR SALE: Volumes 1-39 in the "Chronological Bing Crosby" CD series. Open to offers for the set or individual CDs.

John Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD, UK (email: carson1812@blueyonder.co.uk)

John Marshall has announced the release of his final DVD in his Follies series. Volume 10 is Christmas Follies 2009 and contains the usual mix of music video, drawn from various online and download sources. Several appearances by Bing plus other stars. Price is £10 inc P&P.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, contact Ray.

George Ulrich, 2801 First Avenue, Unit #301, Seattle, Washington 98121, USA (Tel: 206-283-6051, email: george@alicefaye.com)

FOR SALE

Bing Crosby Historical Society Presents:

#1 "A Tribute to Bing" - Blame It On My Youth, How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm, The Lament of Homer Tracy, Iowa

#2 Tribute Record #3 - Man With the Mandolin, Blue Orchid, Where the Surf Meets the Turf, Beware

#3 "A Tribute to Bing with Roy Chappell" - A Horse That Knows the Way Home, She's From Missouri

All excellent condition. \$5 each plus shipping in USA & Canada \$3.50 per order.

Bing's Hollywood LPs

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

POCKET FULL OF DREAMS - Light cover scuffing and edge wear.

EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN - Light cover scuffing and edge wear.

THE ROAD BEGINS

ONLY FOREVER - Light edge wear top, 4" frosted tape upper right edge, light scuffing front bottom

HOLIDAY INN - Light cover scuffing and edge wear

BLUE SKIES - Some edge wear spine and bottom.

SUNSHINE CAKE - Edge wear top and bottom. Small paper loss on back (not on any printing)

COOL OF THE EVENING - Light edge wear top and bottom

ZING A LITTLE ZONG - Light edge wear. Name printed near top in blue ink on blue background - not bad

ANYTHING GOES - Original plastic wrap. Hole punched upper right. \$10.

No splits on any of the jackets. Records all fine-excellent condition. Can email images if necessary. All \$8 each

except the last one (plus shipping).

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA
(phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net). Regular newsletters are issued.

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. In August, the Crosby film was *Waikiki Wedding* whilst the film night on October 7 featured *Road To Morocco* and the Astaire / Rogers pic *Flying Down to Rio*. The next film night is on December 2 at Melbourne Girls' College in Richmond, Victoria.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This site comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and great clips from Bing's films.

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:

www.mcckc.edu/~crosby

A wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

A Bing Crosby Discography

Set up and maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this site can be found at:

<http://www.jazzdiscography.com/Artists/Crosby/crosby.html>

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

This is a most impressive web site maintained by our member, Crissi Newton. Well worth a look.

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698) website: www.intuneinternational.com

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, web page:

<http://www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml>)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US\$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US\$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(Web site: <http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html>)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: <http://www.jolson.org>)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: <http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/>)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743).

A bi-monthly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the USA. Web page: <http://sinatramusicsociety.googlepages.com/>

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418). Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month, The Montrose Hotel, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and \$15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

1. Bing – On the Road to Elko

by Carolyn Schneider, a 6" by 9" hardcover book with 140 pages and more than 50 photos (some never previously published). \$20 plus \$4 postage to USA residents.

Jim Kukura was one of the first to read it.

Bing Crosby liked to think of himself as just an ordinary guy. And, except for his extraordinary talents as an entertainer, he was pretty much like anyone else. Like us, Bing was many things to many people. He was a son, brother, husband, father, uncle, entertainer, sports enthusiast, business man, rancher. Rancher? While most of us are familiar with the fact that Bing owned a ranch near Elko, Nevada where he spent summers with his first family, there are not many details known about that facet of Bing's life. Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, has recently released her second book about her famous uncle, titled, "Bing: On The Road To Elko". This book contains a wealth of fascinating details about Bing's Elko days that have here-to-fore been unreported.



Bing shows off the inscription in his new Levi jacket which has just been presented to him in Elko.

As Carolyn's book reveals, Bing made the first of seven purchases of ranching spreads in the Elko area in 1943. He would continue to be actively involved in the ranching operations of his holdings until 1952, when Dixie Crosby lost her battle with cancer. In 1958 Bing divested himself of all his Nevada properties. For the decade or so that Bing was actively involved in ranching in the Elko area, there are many stories about Bing melting into the local culture. The decision to accord Bing the title of Honorary Mayor of Elko in 1948, and the ensuing planning and activities are the subject of one

chapter. Another chapter covers Bing's relationship with the Native Americans on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, between Bing's North Fork ranch and the Idaho border. Yet another subject is Bing's famous "denim tuxedo". Later, its eventual appearance on Ebay and other strange places is given great attention by the author, with details of her sleuthing various claims of authenticity. There is also a chapter devoted to Bing's decision to hold the world premier of "Here Comes The Groom" in Elko as a fund raiser for the local hospital.

Carolyn Schneider accompanied her mom, Bing's sister, Mary Rose, as a frequent guest at several of Bing's ranch holdings over the years. She was able to observe first hand how her Uncle Bing conducted himself and interacted with employees, guests, and townsfolk. Carolyn was also able to absorb much of the local culture herself as she developed relationships with a number of ranch hands that introduced her to the daily routines of a working cattle ranch.

There are just too many anecdotes and personal remembrances to cover in a book review. There is a very nice foreword by Bing's nephew, Howard Crosby. And there is a plethora of photographs that you will probably only see in this book. While we all anticipate the publishing of the second volume of Gary Giddins' book on Bing's life, there is no way this much attention to Bing's Elko years could be covered in such detail in such an all-inclusive effort. Bing was really comfortable with his acceptance with the Elko citizenry, and the details of his life there portray Bing as you or I might have known him if he had been our neighbor. If you are a fan, and you really want to know Bing better than you already do, you need to read this book.

Jim Kukura

Carolyn had a very successful book signing event at the Rampart Casino in Las Vegas on October 20. The book can be obtained direct from Carolyn at 9811 W. Charleston Blvd. #2-185, Las Vegas, Nevada 89117 (phone: 702-240-8570 or email: artist71635@msn.com).

Due to a special arrangement with the publisher Carolyn requests that you order the book directly from her. Carolyn will gladly autograph and inscribe the book to all purchasers. UK, EU and Ireland members have a separate insert in this issue for ordering purposes.

2. Perry Como - A Biography and Complete Career Record

by Malcolm Macfarlane and Ken Crossland.
Published by McFarland & Co, July 2009.
Hardcover, 310pp. List price \$55. ISBN 978-0-7864-3701-6.

Michael Collins offers his review of this new book which mentions Bing in many places.

It was Mark Twain who famously said, "Everyone seems to complain about the weather, but no one ever

seems to be able to do anything about it." If Twain were around today, he might just as easily have directed his remarks at Perry Como as at the weather. I have lost count of the number of times, over the past decade or two, that I've heard music critics make the comment that Como is the most underrated singer of the Twentieth Century. Everyone is whining, nobody appears to be able to do anything about it. Well, here at long last is a beginning, a very powerful step in the right direction and an impressive attempt to restore the smooth crooner back to the position where he rightfully belongs. Malcolm Macfarlane and Ken Crossland have together come up with a splendid book which is part autobiography, part discography and part diary of events. Wisely, they have eschewed delving into the singer's private affairs. It was, you might say, an easy decision to reach. From the very beginning of his career, Como has insisted that his private life and family are out of bounds, a decision which remains non-negotiable. Moreover, his career apart, he seems to have lived a life of exceptional dullness by showbiz standards. The very fact that he was married to the same woman for sixty-five years says it all.

Perhaps, not quite all. Mr. Crossland does not flinch from dealing with some of the darker sides of Como's personality when the occasion demands it. As was the case with Bing, Perry could at times be cold and implacable. Like all Italians, he set great store on loyalty. Any hint of betrayal (and sometimes it took only an imagined slight) could bring the "ice curtain" down. Often, many years passed before it was lifted. There are times, indeed, when you wish the author had more meat of this kind to work on, but ultimately that would have been a distraction. For the most part, the writers made a virtue out of a necessity and instead concentrated on Como the singer and television performer. Thus, the reader soon finds himself listening to the early tracks made with the Ted Weems Orchestra, endeavoring to pick out the 'upper mordents' in Perry's version of "Class Will Tell." In theory, this could be a dry-as-dust pursuit but Crossland (as he showed in his excellent biography of Michael Holliday) never forgets the reader and always keeps the narrative moving at a brisk pace.

We soon learn that Como's recording career was stunningly successful. "When music historian Joel Whitburn published his list of the top ten chart performers from 1950 to 1999, the only representative of the pre-rock era was Perry Como." As the actor Michael Caine might have put it: "Not many people know that." But he was also perhaps the most technically proficient of all the major song stylists over the long haul. He hardly ever made a substandard recording. Many of his professional peers, notably Peggy Lee, Jo Stafford, Mel Tormé and Johnny Mercer, have suggested as much. Hence, we come up against a strange paradox - a singer's singer who also happened to have an immense popular appeal. The unraveling of this mystery is what

has made the present book such a fascinating read.

As Ken Crossland shows in his early chapters, the world that Como entered as a young adult was dominated by one figure, Bing Crosby. Crosby bestrode that world like a colossus. Jazz was a new idiom, its practitioners were forging a new grammar and a new syntax, improvising ingeniously as they went along. Crosby began his career as a jazz singer and, by the end of the Twenties, had attracted an ardent band of followers. Then, at the beginning of the following decade, he somehow mutated into a crooner, much to the dismay of his more diehard fans. This change brought with it a huge increase in popularity while at the same time presenting the singers who came after him with a huge problem. Like a James Joyce or a W. B. Yeats in literature, he wielded a tremendous influence. The trick was to take on board his innovative style of singing while avoiding some of its trademark components.

It was a narrow and treacherous path to tread. Some were more successful than others. Perry Como has repeatedly said that when he started, unless you sounded a little bit like Crosby, you did not get any work. That seems to have been the case for most of the decade and for much of the one that followed. The young Jo Stafford, when she joined the Dorsey Band in 1940, was elated to come across a fellow vocalist who for once did not sound like Bing. This is not to say that Sinatra was not influenced by him. As he admitted many years later, Crosby was the idol of his youth and the father of his career. But, unlike many of his contemporaries (Como included), he avoided sounding too much like his idol and mentor.



Bing and Perry rehearse for a 1960 TV appearance.

Here, as the academics tend to say, one has to distinguish - and Ken Crossland does so very convincingly. By employing the musical equivalent of a close textual analysis of the singer's apprenticeship with Ted Weems, he shows how the Thirties' Como evolved as a singer and how by the end of the decade he had made (to use Como's own phrase) the necessary "left turn". Still, reputations are not that easily shed. The old saying, that the man who has the name for being an early riser can safely lie in till noon, unfortunately cuts both ways. Many persist in seeing him as a sort of 'Bing-lite'. The perception remained both an asset and a liability for most of his career, at least until the early Seventies when he experienced a huge resurgence in popularity (as did Crosby though to a much more limited extent). By then Perry's voice had grown subtly attenuated, losing some of the mellow Crosby tone, sounding at times more like a light tenor. Bing's voice, meanwhile, had grown deeper and darker. Nobody by that stage could confuse the two, and this worked to Como's advantage as he was now relating directly to a younger audience who knew little of Crosby and his influence and was prepared to accept Como on his own merits.

The acclaimed biographer, Hilary Spurling in the preface to her recent work on Sonia Brownell, George Orwell's widow, quotes from a celebrated colleague, Michael Holroyd, - a quote which like that of Mark Twain has a curious relevance to the topic under discussion. "I have tried to pare back what Michael Holroyd called history's cuticle of lies..." Unlike the controversial Ms Brownell, Perry Como was just about the least contentious person in show business. He may not have been the victim of lies but history's accretions have burdened him with some peculiar distortions. As Crossland points out, he is unfairly saddled with the reputation of being a mere singer of novelties, a view which blithely overlooks the fact that he was also a superb balladeer in his own right. Crossland points out that many singers of that era, Crosby and Sinatra included, tried their hand at novelty numbers. "The difference with Como was that he could carry it off better than anyone else." It was a shrewd observation. The political historian, Peter Hennessy, published his massive survey of the Fifties, *Having it so Good*, in 2006. The book ran to over seven hundred pages of which only a few made any reference to popular culture. Yet, in a BBC radio interview, he spoke fondly of Perry Como, adding that every time he hears "Magic Moments" he comes out in goose bumps. This may not be a novelty item exactly though it is not too far removed from the genre. Como's smooth, seamless rendition has elevated it to another level and it has now become the semi-official anthem of that bygone era. Likewise, the much maligned "Hot Diggity" has, it is sometimes overlooked, an underlying tune of considerable pedigree - Chabrier's "Espana Rhapsody" (yet another song which belongs to the series of Como's signature

reinterpretations of classical melodies).

But history's lies operate at a much more sinister level and, to understand this, we have to go back again to George Orwell, in particular to the chilling term "unperson" which comes from his futuristic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is a term which revives memories of Stalinist Russia, of how those fallen from grace were not merely liquidated but had every trace of their existence removed from the pages of history. Even their very images were cleverly excised from all official photographs. Crosby fans have long grown inured to the fact that their hero has been "unpersoned" in the Orwellian sense. There may be no malice aforethought, but the job gets done just as effectively either way. It is common, for example, to see the movie *High Society* advertised as starring Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly even though Sinatra's part was originally a subsidiary one. History is daily being rewritten in an alternative version, those who were in a position to correct it no longer being around to make protest. Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw (two of the Twentieth Century's most accomplished musicians) have been relegated to oblivion, as has Crosby's gifted protégé, Michael Holliday (a huge British star in his day)... and now Perry Como. Michael Feinstein's brilliant Foreword serves as a warning to all readers of how easy it is, in this mutable and shallow culture, to become "the forgotten man." It deserves to be framed.

Several years ago, a contributor to the literary pages of *THE SPECTATOR* momentarily went off topic just to illustrate the point that writers are often evaluated on their own terms. "Nobody" he went on to say, "took Sinatra seriously until he began to call himself a 'song stylist'." This may have been a little unfair to the singer whose achievements were solidly established regardless, but the general point was well taken. If, like Crosby and Como, you go out of your way to downplay your talents, there is always the danger that people may take you at your word. Ken Crossland repeatedly shows that what Perry Como did was far from easy. He just made it seem easy. The art that conceals art can sometimes, alas, do its job all too effectively. I heartily recommend the book to all who are interested in this truly fine singer.

Michael Collins

(Editor: Thank you Michael for your thoughtful review. It was nice to have a positive reaction from Perry's son David who said "You all have done an awesome job and have honored my Dad in a special way - I will always be grateful." Ray Charles too came in with "I received a copy of that handsome book and I have to commend you both on a magnificent job. . . It's a wonderful book and should please all the Como fans and enlighten anyone interested in what music was like in the dark ages.")

3. Puttin' on the Ritz—Fred Astaire and the Fine Art of Panache.

By Peter J. Levinson. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, March 17, 2009. Hardcover, 477 pages, ISBN 978-0-312-35366-7. \$21.45 from Amazon.

In his 50 years in radio, television, films and recordings, Bing worked comfortably with thousands of public personalities—from opera stars to baseball players, from low comics to President Kennedy. Not to mention his encounters in vaudeville, the Bix era, the golf pros and the horse racing set.

It is hard to think of another American who had contact with more noted figures during those years. Only a few—if that—became friends, but he knew them all. So it is natural for him to make cameo appearances in books written about other famous individuals of the time.

A current example is the latest biography of the incomparable Fred Astaire. Peter Levinson, the author, a music publicist, unfortunately died before the book came out this year. His account of the early Astaire years is pretty much a cut-and-paste job. But he claimed to have interviewed more than 200 show business personalities about the later Astaire years. Many of them knew Bing as well. Despite its subtitle, the biography as written is short of panache, but Astaire provides a good deal of it.

Levinson sheds no light on whether Crosby and Astaire first met each other in New York or perhaps at MGM, where both were filming—on different sets—for a month in 1933. But they quickly shared a passion for horse racing at Santa Anita. By 1936 Astaire had invested in the new Del Mar track, for which Crosby was the most enthusiastic promoter. Perhaps few persons today remember how often in 1930s radio and newspapers, Bing was the target of wisecracks about the failures of his stable of horses.

The book portrays Bing as always respectful of Fred, saying—at the time they co-starred in *Holiday Inn*—that “as a dancer, Astaire is the greatest that ever lived. He has genius plus hard work.” In World War II, the two of them appeared together in USO shows in England and France, as reported by Levinson.

He examines the circumstances in which Bing forced Paul Draper out of a co-starring role in *Blue Skies*, (1946) opening the way for Fred as Draper's replacement. Draper complained that Paramount's female lead, Joan Caulfield, Bing's girl friend at the time, couldn't dance. But Draper, a talented dancer in certain styles, had a speaking problem and also was probably too precious in his mannerisms to be acceptable to Crosby as a co-star.

Levinson's book dredges up the episode in which Louis Armstrong was quoted late in life as being upset that Bing had not invited him to the Crosby home,

although they each had called the other a “great friend.” When a reporter challenged Crosby on this snub—if snub it was—Bing supposedly replied: “Perhaps I should have.”

Buddy Bregman, who worked with both Fred and Bing, is quoted as saying that Bing “sang” a love song, but Fred “meant it.” Fred's passion for punishing rehearsals is contrasted with Bing's casualness. But Astaire more or less excused Crosby at one point, saying that casualness does not always mean carelessness or disrespect for the audience.



Fred and Bing at work in 1975 in London

Their London recording session with Ken Barnes gets attention, as do some of Fred's radio and television appearances with Bing. Despite a few quibbles, Bing comes across as the steady, stylish and hard-working star he was. The book brings back many memories of a classic era in which both men flourished as magnificent entertainers. For Bing fans, it's worth a look.

Bob Achorn

(Editor: Thanks, Bob. Just a thought – did Louis ever invite Bing to his home? It works both ways.)

ICC membership

In our last issue, we reproduced a few words about the ICC which had been seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum. Subsequently, one of our Australian members who uses the nom-de-plume of *Bird Custard* on the Museum bulletin board raised a related topic.

“Just out of interest, who here is a member of the International Crosby Club and who isn't? If you're a member, how long have you been part of the Club and

do you find it worthwhile? If you're not a Member, why not?"

Ben Weaver, from Vancouver Island, replied first.

I've been a member for 20 years. It's amazing how the contributors and editors manage to include such new and interesting material about the many things related to Bing in each issue. A wonderful magazine. I always look forward to receiving it.

Alan Matheson

I've been a member since 1998 and would have joined sooner if I'd known more about it. I look forward to the magazine and wish they could publish more often. There have been many great articles and CD/DVD reviews over the years and the magazine has a really professional look.

Malcolm Macfarlane

I've been a member since 1979. I am uneasy about fan clubs but when I went to the Leeds meeting in 1979, I found a nice bunch of people who shared my interest in Bing. The magazine gave me a regular injection of Crosbyana and 10 years later I found myself involved in its production.

Jarbie (John Richard Baker)

Joined nearly 32 years back, in Reg Bristo days. He seemed to do more or less everything, producing an old fashioned cyclostyle news sheet. Now we have a glossy magazine with coloured cover. The prompt for action was Bing's last Palladium concert where I learnt about the ICC. Till then (though I had been buying Bing's records since the mid 1950s) I was only dimly aware of it. Besides I didn't join fan clubs - but the concert gave me a burst of enthusiasm. (Looking back on it, the slightly surprising aspect was that I took my young daughters along and they became enthusiastic too, at a time when their peers were "into" rather more modern and raucous stuff). It was only about that time that a few LPs also mentioned the ICC on the sleeve. By the time I had signed up, Bing was dead. I could not manage without the ICC. Money well spent. The various publications, the magazine, which among other things enables me to keep up with record issues that I might otherwise miss, (including special prices for members and information on restricted circulation issues), and other advantages too numerous to list.

I do not see either the ICC or the magazine having a bias one way or the other on either side of the Atlantic - there is international input, and anyway CDs have international circulation. The listings might reflect a majority of reissue CDs from the UK, but I think that this is a result of a number of smaller firms in the UK and elsewhere in Europe making use of the shorter copyright periods. But the point is that issues on either side of the Atlantic come to the attention of the other and

can usually be obtained. The majors in possession of the rights (and presumably masters), have hardly covered themselves in glory, and possibly deserve the pirates, if that is what they are.

Long live ICC. But I fear that despite heroic efforts to fly the flag, Bing's memory is fading.

Bird Custard

It's great to read these posts. I joined in 1995 and I always look forward to the Magazine. Well done to those who keep it going. I first read about the ICC on the "Crosby Christmas" CD notes.

Btorp (Bill Torpey)

I've been a member from the moment I learned about the ICC, which wasn't until mid-2006 when I began to play around with computers and discovered Steven's wonderful Bing Crosby Internet Museum. BING magazine is fantastic. I wouldn't be without it. I'm hopeful that the younger generations will come to know Bing, and I try to make whatever small contribution I can to that effort. I feel the same way about this site.

Steve Fay

I've only been a member of ICC for about 1½ years. Sending in my membership check to Wig and beginning active discussion here around the same time. Although I had read around on this website and explored enough of Bing's presence on the internet to learn some of the history of ICC and other fan groups for a year or two prior to joining, it seemed like involvement on this site and as a member of ICC was required if I really wanted to take my interest in Bing seriously. I love finding all of the new things to be learned from experienced members in both groups.

Ron Field

I joined The Southern Cross Branch of The Club Crosby in the early 50's. I joined the ICC about 1984 or so. Michael Crampton could answer that. And being a Bing fan has generated meeting new Bing people and hopefully I can be regarded as a friend. Also, people that know of my passion for things Bing have come forward by giving me records, books etc. Bing seems to have brought out the best in people.

Jon Oye

I've been a member for some 15 years now, and look forward to each new issue of *BING*. Like others here, I'm not really a fan club type person, but the ICC is the exception to the rule. In fact, the term "fan club" doesn't quite fit the ICC, as members' attitudes towards Bing are much more measured and mature than those of your basic gushing fanatic. Since the merger of Club Crosby (US) and the International Crosby Circle (UK), the content is pretty well balanced from one side of the Atlantic to the other. In fact, I'd say it's now roughly 55-

45 in favor of the Yanks. And the folks from Down Under regularly chime in as well. It's all Bing, so it's all good.

Jim Kukura

I found myself being welcomed as a new member in the August, 1994 issue of BING magazine. I used to bring them up to my dad to read after I was through reading each issue, but I never got them back. When I finally pressed my claim, I found that my sister had copied each issue for my dad. So I signed my dad up as a new member also. When I decided that I needed some kind of Bing organization to assist my audio and video library collections, I went to the library and checked some big book that had all kinds of organizations. I was drawn to the Bing Crosby Historical Society, and wrote to Ken Twiss requesting membership. Ken and I exchanged a few letters and after a short two years or so, Ken announced that health was forcing him to close shop and donate most of what he had to the Gonzaga Library collection. Shortly after that, I received a letter from Wig Wiggins suggesting that I consider joining the ICC since the BCHS was no more. I quickly accepted and have ever so grateful ever since.

Freightgod (Paul Fisher)

The ICC is a great club and the BING magazine is a great service. I had to let my membership lapse this year due to unemployment and tough choices but I still feel like a member at heart.

Subsequently, there was a reaction when BING #152 arrived and Steven Lewis was the first to comment and here are some extracts from what he said.

The new issue of BING, the quarterly magazine of the International Club Crosby, arrived today. I stopped all chores to scan it from cover to cover. I noted a photograph of Mrs. Crosby and her three children together on stage at Feinstein's in New York singing "White Christmas." This is the first new photo I've seen of all four together in a very long time...The photo of Mary Crosby on page 33 was striking in its resemblance to Kathryn. Mary has become the spittin' image of her mom, to use a popular midwestern phrase.

There is little doubt the 3 offshoots of Bing and Kathryn turned out far better than the 4 produced by Bing and Dixie. Bing's move from Hollywood to San Francisco in 1964 probably saved the family from some of the bad influences of Tinseltown. By that time Bing was no longer the center of the entertainment universe, as he had been while raising his first brood. As Gary made plain in *Going My Own Way*, being a celebrity's son is not all fun and games. Envious classmates will beat the celebrity out of you and wannabes will try to use you to get to your celebrity parent.

Despite his enormous celebrity, Bing never let it go

to his head and imposed the same standards on his children. He didn't seem to mind his disappearance from the pop music charts, expressing more amazement that he ever made the charts in the first place. Like Bing's first group of kids, many entertainment celebs cannot withstand the intense media pressure. The latest meltdown is Mischa Barton, "Mouse" from the movie *Lost and Delirious*.

My one disappointment with the new issue was the photo of Malcolm and Michael in the ICC's headquarters. I had always envisioned a bustling office space in a bank building in downtown London. Instead, it looks like my basement apartment when I attended KU.

BING noted the dearth of new releases of Bing's music and movies, but suggested that an avalanche of new material is just around the corner and that Crosby fans should "be patient." Unfortunately, most of these patient fans won't get the message because they are asleep in the cemetery. But, like Jean Dixon's predictions, if you keep making them long enough one is bound to come true! I'll keep swallowing those longevity pills and hope Greg and Malcolm are right this time.

(Editor: Steven made me smile with his reference to the ICC HQ. Michael Crampton converted his loft to make more space for his Crosby activities and very effective it is too. I suppose the term ICC makes members visualise a professional organisation with a prestigious set of offices, executives (and their secretaries) with various departments, final salary pensions, healthcare and even bonus schemes! In truth, it's a few scattered individuals doing their thing and trying their best to keep the interest in Bing alive under the umbrella name of International Club Crosby. Similarly, Steven does a great job with the Bing Crosby Internet Museum which is a wonderful reference source for those wanting to know a little more about the most successful entertainer of the 20th Century.)

Jane Stoutenborough responded quickly.

I have not yet received my copy of BING but I believe the photo you are referring to is one I took and sent to Malcolm. I have been attending Kathryn Crosby's performances in Manhattan for the last 5 years and at all of her performances, some members of her and Bing's family were always present. Since Harry lives in Manhattan with his family, it was usually him or his wife and when possible they were both in attendance showing their support. At the first Feinstein appearance two or three years ago everyone was present except Harry. Mary, Nathaniel and his wife as well as Harry's wife were there and Mary and Nathaniel appeared on stage with Kathryn at the end of her show. This Feinstein's appearance included all 3 children and Harry and Nathaniel's wives. They always seem pleased to be in attendance and show great affection towards one another

and share that affection with their mother.

Steve Fay was next.

My copy of BING arrived Friday (now is Monday). What a terrific issue! I also liked seeing the current pictures of the family. But as for comparisons of the two families, the reprinted article by Lindsay, also in this issue, provides a startlingly different view of Bing as father with the first four boys from that portrayed in Gary's book. Imagine how differently parts of the public might have processed their view of Bing in the years just following his death had a book by Lindsay offset that atrociously written *Hollow Man* tome.

Also, note the lengthy inclusion of our discussion about Bing's albums with Billy May, supplemented by additional comments and information collected by Malcolm. An abrupt reminder that if we ask interesting enough questions here on the forum we might just end up in print on paper!...something I tend to forget most of the time. It is of course an honor to see anything I said on the pages of BING.

Maureen Solomon, by email.

Got the latest issue. Fantastic as usual. I loved the story from Lindsay Crosby. We should all carry that in our pockets!

Celluloid Crosby

Q: Which Christmas song, recorded by Bing three times, is one of his least heard seasonal songs?

A: The Secret of Christmas.

When, if ever did you hear this played on the radio? Come to that, when did you last put the song on your turntable or programme it on a doubtfully legal CD? Bing's first attempt at making a studio recording of this song from the film *Say One for Me* took place shortly after work on that movie was completed. Percy Faith's orchestra accompanied Bing on March 6th, 1959 for a version of the song that has never been issued commercially although pirate versions have escaped from the Columbia vaults. When Bing returned to Columbia's Los Angeles recording studio some nineteen days later to take another shot at the vocal the orchestra and chorus of Frank De Vol supported him. That became the first issued version.

Fast forward five years to Bing's session for the Reprise album "Twelve Songs of Christmas". Bing's three solo contributions to that disc included "The Secret of Christmas" with Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians providing musical support.

Why is this wistfully sentimental Sammy Cahn-James Van Heusen composition ignored? The single release of the 1959 recording was coupled with "Just What I Wanted for Christmas", a less than memorable Cahn-Van Heusen effort. It did not enjoy hit parade status. The album release was on the "soundtrack" LP of the film and the song was surrounded by what many regard as mediocre material. If you want to hear the actual soundtrack recording of the song you'll find it on the Australian issued LP "Going Hollywood Vol. 16" when Bing is joined by Debbie Reynolds and Robert Wagner. As for the Reprise version, that too finds Bing sharing tracks, this time with Fred Waring. I don't find that album anymore compelling to listen to than the "Say One for Me" Columbia release.



Debbie Reynolds joins Bing in singing "The Secret of Christmas"

Which leads to the film itself. When Martin McQuade reviewed Robert Wagner's biography "Pieces of My Heart" in issue #151 of this magazine he quoted Wagner as telling director Frank Tashlin, "I'd rather have Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen write my material than your friend." If the director had had his way then we should have been deprived of "The Secret of Christmas" to accommodate Tashlin's wish to include his friend's songs in the film. There was a reason behind Tashlin's suggestion, however. Pre-production of the film began in February, 1958. Tashlin worked on the project for eight weeks. He then took a break to work on a film he was contracted to make for Paramount Pictures. This was the Jerry Lewis comedy *Rockabye Baby* which he wrote as well as directed. He then returned to Twentieth Century-Fox in September of

1958 to continue working on *Say One for Me*. In the interim, a musicians' strike had been called and it is probable that Tashlin was attempting to pre-empt any disruption to his Fox film by making "alternative arrangements".

Frank Tashlin had earlier links with Bing. His career began in the 1930s when he worked on cartoons. Caricatures of Bing were in two of them: *The Woods Are Full of Cuckoos* (1937) and *Swooner Crooner* (1944). He eventually progressed to writing for Bob Hope films and was writer-director of Hope's 1952 comedy *Son of Paleface* in which Bing made a brief gag appearance.

Bing and Debbie Reynolds were signed to the project in mid-November. When it was known that Crosby was to take the leading role of Father Conroy the studio became anxious not to offend Catholics. They used Monsignor Devlin as script consultant. The character in the script called Bishop Francis Stradford was a television priest who was based on Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

Sheen requested that his character be eliminated from the script. Acceptable alterations were made to the part and Bishop Sheen was eventually placated by the script amendments. The part of Monsignor Stradford was played by Sebastian Cabot.

The two songs written by Cahn and Van Heusen for the part of night club entertainer Holly LaMaise that were to make the final cut of the film were "You Can't Love 'em All" and "The Girl Most Likely to Succeed". There was to be a third number: "He's Starting to Get to Me". There was a studio executive at Twentieth Century-Fox - Frank McCarthy - who felt the song contained elements of what he termed "sex tease". As the part of Holly was to be portrayed by sweet girl-next-door Debbie Reynolds it's hard to imagine the males in the audience becoming overheated. Anyway, the song went. It was also McCarthy who brought about a minor amendment to the scene where Bing performs a few dance steps outside the church. "He should be in street clothes, not robes or vestments", decreed McCarthy. And so the shooting script was finalised and filming began on December 15th, 1958 on the Fox lot. Main photography finished on March 6th of the following year.

During the filming Bing received voting papers in his capacity as a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. This enabled him to show his support for Oscar nominees. In 1959 the Academy Awards were presented on April 6th. Two days before the ceremony David Niven received a letter from Bing. The letter was found amongst Niven's personal effects following his death. It read:

"Dear David,

I have committed a heinous breach of Academy discipline. I voted for you without having seen the picture *Separate Tables*. I'm glad I did though,

because last night I got a chance to see the movie. Your performance is the most delicate sensitive portrayal I've ever seen on the screen - a truly accurate delineation of a pitiable phony. Congratulations David - win or lose or draw Monday night."

Niven won the Oscar that year. Two years later he was to appear in a bit part as a Tibetan monk in *The Road to Hong Kong*.

It is curious to note that although Bing was first billed on the film credits of *Say One For Me*, the publicity material promoting the film placed Debbie Reynolds above him. This would not be an issue that would remotely perturb Bing. He always held the view that it was preferable to share billing with others. His reasoning was simple. If a film was a hit the glory was spread around without diminishing his own performance. If the movie flopped the blame could be shared. When Ken Barnes wrote the lyrics for the 1975 duet "Top Billing" for Crosby and Astaire, Fred Reynolds rightly called it "the reversal of their real attitudes" in his book "The Crosby Collection".

This attitude is illustrated by a story related by Orson Welles to his biographer Peter Bogdanovitch in 1972. Welles said:

"An album that I did with Bing Crosby was Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince". It wasn't released for a year because neither of us would take first billing. In the end they had to toss a coin just to get the thing out."

Absolute nonsense, of course. Neither Crosby nor Welles made that kind of decision. It does make a good story, however.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: Bing's versions of "The Secret of Christmas" are great favourites of mine. It's a lovely song which was also recorded by Ella Fitzgerald, Johnny Mathis and Julie Andrews amongst others. It was good to see Bing's 1964 version included on the recent Sinatra release 'Nothing But The Best (Limited Christmas Edition)').)

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

VARIETY GIRL Film. This turned out to be the last of Paramount's portmanteau films. Made in the winter of 1946, it sat on the shelf until the late summer of 1947. It was made as a tribute to the Variety Club of America, a charity formed for the purpose of helping underprivileged children. The film's flimsy plot has leading lady Mary Hatcher seeking a career in Hollywood and coming into contact with dozens of stars. Not surprisingly they all seem to be contracted to Paramount including the studio's top money spinners, Crosby and Hope. They appear in a golfing scene and sing "Harmony" but by the time the film reached the

U.K. that song had been edited from the release print.

VERA-ELLEN [Vera Ellen Westmeier Rohe] (1921-1981) Dancer who acted. Vera-Ellen had been in Hollywood films for ten years when she was fourth billed as Judy Haynes in *White Christmas* (1954). She was part of the musical quartet comprising Crosby, Clooney and Kaye and was the only one of the four unable to carry a tune. Her musical contributions were supplied by Gloria Wood. She rose to fame in two of *White Christmas* co-star's Danny Kaye films, making her debut in *Wonder Man* (1945) and following it with *The Kid from Brooklyn* (1946). Her dancing skills were recognised by Hollywood's two leading male dancers and she found herself partnering Gene Kelly in *On the Town* (1949) and Fred Astaire in *The Belle of New York* (1952). She knew when to quit the movies and retired from the screen whilst she was still at the top of her craft after making *Let's be Happy* in the UK in 1957.

VERMILYEA, HAROLD (1889-1958) Character actor. When cast as the Chamberlain of the European country which formed the setting for *The Emperor Waltz* (1948), Harold Vermilyea did not have to struggle to find an appropriate foreign accent as he was of Russian descent. In fact, casting directors probably used him solely because he spoke in a "not from these parts" accent. Vermilyea had been an operatic singer before he took up acting in films.

VOGEL, PAUL C. (1899-1975) Director of photography. Vogel was the man behind the camera for *High Society* (1956). His brother was president of MGM, which possibly accounted for Paul C's long association with that studio. He photographed the MGM picture *Angels in the Outfield* in 1951 in which Bing had a short scene. He won an Academy Award for his black and white photography for *Battleground* (1949). He made the transition to colour around about 1953 and subsequent credits included *The Student Prince* (1954), *The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm* (1962) and *Return of the Seven* (1966).

VON TILZER, HARRY VON (1872-1946) Composer. One of his most famous compositions was "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie", which Bing duetted with Mary Martin in *Birth of the Blues* (1941). After quitting the circus Harry Von Tilzer decided to write popular songs and he was one of the first residents of New York's Tin Pan Alley. He wrote dozens of songs, few of which are still sung today. His biggest hit in Great Britain was "Under the Anheuser Bush" which he wrote in 1903 and which was retitled "Down at the Old Bull and Bush" for pub sing-songs. His brother was Albert Von Tilzer (1878-1956), composer of "I'll Be with You in Apple Blossom Time".

VYE, MURVYN (1913-1976) Actor. Vye played Merlin in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*



Bing suggests that Mr. Vermilyea should get himself a phonograph.

(1949) and Prince Ken Arok in *Road to Bali* (1953). In the latter film he was the reason Bing and Bob travelled to Bali in response to the Prince's advertisement for deep sea divers. Vye came to Hollywood via Broadway, his first film being *Golden Earrings* (1947). Often cast as a heavy in pictures he showed his lighter side when he became a regular on television's "The Bob Cummings Show" in 1961.

WAGNER, ROBERT (1930-) Actor. He played the "juvenile" lead in *Say One for Me* (1959). As Tony Vincent he was depicted as a man of dubious morals when the film began. A man with such a reputation could never win the heart of leading lady Debbie Reynolds so when the film ended with them as husband and wife we knew he had reformed. Wagner's career in films began in 1950 when 20th Century-Fox made full use of his handsome good looks and easygoing manner by casting him in *The Happy Years*. He matured into an assured leading man with acting talent. By 1954 he was playing the title role in *Prince Valiant*. His Crosby picture came at a time when his contract with Fox was about to end and in the early 1960s he made films in Italy and the UK in order to maintain his reputation as a male lead whose name above the title could attract audiences. By the 1970s his return to the Hollywood mainstream found him taking main supporting roles in films such as *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and *Airport '79 Concorde* (1979). By then he had figured out that he could extend his career indefinitely by switching to television. Series such as "It Takes a Thief", "Colditz" - made in the UK - and "Hart to Hart" kept him in the public eye. So too did his off-screen romances. He married Natalie Wood twice and, following Wood's death by drowning, the actress Jill St. John.

WAIKIKI WEDDING Film. This 1937 Crosby picture resulted in Bing's first million selling record - "Sweet Leilani". The Harry Owens composition also won the Academy Award for the best film song of that year. The film's running time was one minute short of an hour and a half. Bing sang four songs interwoven into a plot that cast him as the publicity man for the Imperial Pineapple Company. That firm ran a Miss Pineapple contest and Bing fell for the winner, Shirley Ross. The film provided Kraft Music Hall listeners with the opportunity to see Bing's radio show comic relief, Bob Burns. And the twenty-one year old Martha Raye also provided comic relief at a time when her film career was taking off. Another performer to look out for was Anthony Quinn in a minor role. He would have made his mark eventually, but having Cecil B. DeMille as a father-in-law must have made Paramount more kindly disposed to finding parts for him. For some reason the critics liked *Waikiki Wedding* but were afraid to say so outright. Variety said: "Shouldn't have any trouble getting by...it's saccharine celluloid, sugar-coated".

Leslie Halliwell grudgingly conceded, "light-hearted, empty-headed musical very typical of this studio...except that this one is quite good". By now there was strong evidence that film exhibitors in the British Isles were regarding Bing as possessing strong box-office drawing power. In Liverpool, when the Majestic cinema opened its doors for the first time on October 2nd, 1937, *Waikiki Wedding* was selected for the cinema's launch programme.

WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE Song. Written by Andrew Sterling and Harry Von Tilzer, it received two performances in *Birth of the Blues* (1941). Mary Martin sang it as a solo and then to an enthusiastic audience when she was accompanied by Bing and a jazz band. "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie" is one of those songs that has always seemed part of an earlier era and yet which sounds fresh each time it is revived either on screen or disc. Even Buddy Holly recorded it because it was his mother's favourite song. In 1952, 20th Century-Fox made a family film about a small town barber and titled it after the song.

WAITER AND THE PORTER AND THE UPSTAIRS MAID, THE Song. Also from *Birth of the Blues* (1941). This time Bing and Mary Martin were joined by Jack Teagarden in a scene staged at the Lafayette Cafe. It was a typical Johnny Mercer composition with both words and music holding the attention from start to finish. Unlike "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie", "The waiter..." is forever associated with the trio that introduced it in *Birth of the Blues*. Anyone else tackling it would be bound to be compared unfavourably with Crosby, Martin and Teagarden.

WALBURN, RAYMOND (1887-1969) Actor. He played two substantial roles in Crosby films. He was J. Hastings Cook, the father of Dorothy Lamour, in *Dixie* (1943) and "Professor" Pettigrew, a down on his luck race track punter in *Riding High* (1950). He entered films in 1929 and by the mid 1930s he was much in demand for his ability to play either pompous characters or amiable rascals. When the studio production lines began to wind down Walburn left Hollywood, his last film being *The Spoilers* (1955).

WALKER, HAL (1896-1972) Director. Hal Walker made only nine films, four of which involved Bing, and he is more or less forgotten today because after directing *Road to Bali* in 1953 he left feature films to direct the "I Married Joan" television series and never returned to big screen Hollywood. His other Crosby associated credits are for *Duffy's Tavern* (1945), *Out of This World* (1945) and *Road to Utopia* (1946). Paramount employed him as an assistant director before assigning him to his first two Bing related films. That studio saw him as a specialist in light, undemanding work and the only films he made between his two *Road*

pictures were four Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis comedies.

WALKER, VERNON L. (1894-1948) RKO studio's special effects expert. I can't say I noticed any special photography effects in *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) (perhaps it was the scene with the kitten?) and yet that was the on-screen credit given to Vernon Walker for the film. He'd been with RKO since 1933 and his first three pictures for that studio undoubtedly made use of his special effects skills. They were *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), *Son of Kong* (1934) and *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1935). He rounded off his career at RKO with *Sinbad the Sailor*, made the year before his death.

WALSH, RAOUL (1887-1980) Director. He directed just one Crosby film, *Going Hollywood* (1933). Bing enjoyed the experience of working with Walsh. The fun on the set can be detected in the parody "Rollicking, Rockaway Raoul" which Bing privately recorded as a tribute/memento. Studio head Jack L. Warner summed up the director's approach to movies when he said: "To Raoul Walsh, a tender love scene is burning down a whorehouse". Walsh entered Hollywood movies in 1912 as an assistant to D.W. Griffith. He soon made his mark as an action director and before working on *Going Hollywood* he'd directed over sixty films, quite often providing a screenplay and acting as producer as well. Walsh retired from filming after directing *A Distant Trumpet* in 1964.

WALSTON, RAY (1914-2001) Actor. As Phil Stanley, Ray Walston played the alcoholic pianist accompanying Robert Wagner's Tony Vincent in *Say One for Me* (1959). It was a typical Walston performance where he breezed through the role with the apparent minimum of effort and yet gave a convincing portrayal of his character.



Father Conroy watches Phil Stanley play his piano in *Say One for Me*

He even sang "The Secret of Christmas" solo and later 'accompanied' the Bing, Robert Wagner and Debbie Reynolds version. He could never be described as a vocalist and yet it was his performance in two Hollywood musicals of 1958 that first brought him to the attention of moviegoers: *South Pacific* and *Damn Yankees*. He came to films following his stage and TV work and made his screen debut in *Kiss Them for Me* (1957). By the time he made *Paint Your Wagon* (1969) he was better known for his television series "My Favourite Martian" which ran from 1963 to 1966. A feature film based on the series and featuring Walston was made in 1999.

WALTERS, CHARLES (1911-1982) Director who specialised in musicals. Up until the time he directed his only Crosby movie Walters couldn't put a foot wrong. Preceding *High Society* in 1956 was *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944) [co-directed with Arthur Freed], *Easter Parade* (1948), *Lili* (1953) [for which he received an Academy Award nomination] and *The Tender Trap* (1955). But by the time work on *High Society* was finished so was the Hollywood musical. When the genre was attempting a revival in the early 1960s Walters was given both *Jumbo* (1962) and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (1964) to direct. They were O.K. but failed to sell many tickets. He retired from films at the same time as Cary Grant, their final film together being *Walk, Don't Run* (1966).

Keith Parkinson

Michael Jackson

We did not include an obituary of Michael Jackson in our "Once In A While" section as he had no real involvement with Bing. The nearest link seems to be that Michael sang the song "Ben", the theme song of the movie *Ben* (1972) which was produced by Bing Crosby Productions. The film was a sequel to *Willard* (1971), another Bing Crosby Productions movie. Ben tells the story of a lonely boy who befriends the rat that leads the swarm of trained/telepathic rats found in *Willard*. This rat, whom the boy names Ben, becomes the boy's best friend and keeps his spirits up in the face of bullying. "Ben" became the first number one solo hit for Michael Jackson. So the link between Bing and Michael was tenuous to say the least.

Most readers will know that a blog (a contraction of the term "weblog") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. A blog by Jim Skayfish (rhymes with "crayfish") on the Internet after Jackson's death had quite a lot to say about Bing and Michael. Jim Skayfish was the leader of one of the quirkiest bands of the 1970's and 80's and this is what he wrote on July 3.

The death of Michael Jackson and the short attention span entertainment history

With Michael Jackson's death, we see how the attention span of pop culture regarding entertainment "history" is just centered in the ever fleeting moment of what is considered (and how I hate this word) "relevant" at the time. What's considered "relevant" is what those who are talking about "history" can relate to. That usually pertains to someone or events that are current, as it's all about "Now!"

Remember that America is a country that replaces grand old magnificent architecture with generic shopping malls and cheap pre fad construction, which is also "Now!" So on cable "news" television shows where the question is asked, "Who's the greatest and biggest entertainer of all time?" I'm sure we can all guess who wins that pseudo-historical contest: Michael Jackson. Because he just died, and with all the fanfare surrounding his passing, Michael predictably wins the top vote over the Beatles and Elvis Presley.

What's even more disingenuous than Jackson being rated higher than the Beatles or Presley without any analysis of factual historical data to back it up, is that just a few years ago, I heard scores of musical critics referring to Jackson as not being "relevant" any longer. Oh geez. He was yesterday's news because he didn't sing through vocoder pitch correction like Chris Brown, or shoot anybody and/or get shot, like a rapper. But suddenly, because his death is a sensationalized media event with all of the obligatory controversy needed to boost ratings, he is now once again deemed, "relevant."

Even though Jackson holds the records for the biggest selling album of all time with *Thriller*, both Elvis Presley and the Beatles have had more number one records than Michael. In total, both Presley and the Beatles have sold more records as well. But let's put all three of them aside for a moment and look at two other factors in the debate of who is king.

There are two other major 20th century phenomena who have been forgotten in this supposedly historical media analysis of who's the biggest and the greatest – and those two are Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. Most of you could probably buy Frank Sinatra as a contender for the crown, but Bing Crosby!?!

I bet some of you are not even sure who Bing Crosby actually is, except that he's the guy who sang *White Christmas*, which by the way, was the only song to ever enter the American pop charts 20 separate times, from 1942 to 1962. Before I lay the true stats on you, let me say that I am not particularly a fan of Bing Crosby's, but I am a fan of Michael Jackson.

As I Tweeted on Twitter a few days ago, Michael and I share the same birthday and we grew up only ten minutes apart. Plus, when my father was the president of the local musicians union, he booked the Jackson's for some shows long before Michael become famous.

Energetically, I have always felt a connection with Jackson.

However, separate from my likes and dislikes, I am passionate about wanting entertainment/musical history to be told accurately, which is something that hardly ever happens. I've witnessed it personally being done to me, especially in Chicago, where revisionist history is at a shocking high. My own historically provable contributions to musical history have been attempted by many to be erased in Chicago, or at the very least, greatly trivialized.

First, in real history, not pop culture history, Bing Crosby was the king of entertainment in the first half of the 20th century and can arguably be considered the top entertainer of all time. He was the first to ever be a major force in the development of three emerging mediums back then: recordings, movies, and radio broadcasting. Crosby conquered all three and merged them together.

Simply as a recording artist alone, it is estimated that Crosby made over 2000 commercial recordings, which is far more than any other singer in history – even 400 more than Sinatra. With 38 number one records to his credit, Bing scored more number ones than anyone else in the 20th century. From 1927 and 1962, he scored 368 charted records under his own name, with an added 28 as a vocalist with various bandleaders, for a grand total of 396. With Sinatra at 209, Elvis with 149, and the Beatles having 68, no other artist even remotely can compete with Crosby. By 1980, Bing had sold 400 million records, and the number has greatly increased since then to over a half a billion. In addition to that statistic alone is that most of those sales occurred when the world was infinitely less populated and the recording industry was far smaller than during the times of Presley, the Beatles, and especially the heyday of Michael Jackson in the 1980's.

As a film actor, Bing has sold an estimated one billion, seventy-seven million tickets, and is rated as the third most popular film actor ever, behind Clark Gable and John Wayne. Crosby was an Academy Award best actor nominee three times and won once. He introduced 14 Academy Award nominated songs and won for 4, which is more than any other film star ever. From the years of 1915 to 1980, he was the only film actor to be the number one annual box-office attraction five times, while between 1934 and 1954 he appeared in the top ten 15 times. A staggering 29 of the 55 feature films in which he starred between 1932 and 1971 placed in the top-10 grossing pictures of the year.

As a radio star, Bing's radio show attracted an audience of 50 million, which was simply unheard of. (Again, remember that the world was less populated then.) He appeared on approximately 4000 radio broadcasts, with nearly 3400 of them being his own programs. From 1931 until 1954 on network, and from 1954 until 1962 in syndication, Crosby was a major radio star longer than any other performer in history.

He was also the first person to have radio broadcasts recorded to tape, and was even taken to court by NBC for doing so. After Bing won that court battle, other entertainers began doing the same thing and recorded their own radio shows, which then became an industry standard. Billboard magazine referred to Bing's daring move and subsequent victory to be the most important entertainment story since the invention of talking pictures.

So popular was Crosby, that during the Second World War, he raised an unequaled \$14,500,000 in war bonds and also raised millions for charity by creating the first and longest running celebrity pro-am golf championship, where he played host for 35 years.

So, if we look at the stats, Bing Crosby should certainly be considered the king of entertainment, surpassing Sinatra, Elvis, the Beatles and Michael Jackson. So why isn't he universally considered to hold that crown?

It's because that as an icon, he was already an older man when he died in 1977, unlike Elvis, Jackson or John Lennon, who all died young, and people hardly look back through time to find the truth. There's always the sense that those who identify with and relate to a time period want to immortalize THAT period, as they feel it belongs to them – and that means making their icon or icons the biggest and the best, even when it isn't historically accurate. Hypothetically, if their idol is the biggest and the greatest, they can vicariously be a part of that number one position as well. So, just as I've experienced in Chicago, people make up history as they

go along which is designed to suit their fancy, and if enough people say something, then it becomes perceived as fact.

Keep in mind that Sinatra and Crosby must be considered in any accurate debate over who's the biggest entertainer of the 20th century, not just the names of Elvis, the Beatles, and Jackson. With all of these legends, they have had an incalculable impact on culture in similar and varying ways and have changed the world at large. However, defining and quantifying that impact is somewhat a matter of opinion, and unfortunately, a popularity contest.

If you're a fan of Jackson's, then he's the best and vice versa with Elvis. Again, I'm not a particular fan of Bing Crosby's even though I respect his greatness and talents. But in this media circus regarding Michael Jackson's death where history may be revised once again, someone needs to advocate for the historical facts – and if we look at what is provable, Bing Crosby wins that contest, hands down.

What is so unfortunate to me is that the very definition of the term "history" is supposed to deal with what happened long before as it actually occurred, not just now or in recent memory — and revised to suit people's fancies at that. As our culture becomes ever more opinionated, disposable, fickle, and immediate, the sense of accurate, dispassionate entertainment history becomes more and more lost to the sensationalistic, inaccurate media explosions and exaggerations of the moment.

Jim Skayfish

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

First, it is 'congratulations' on the last issue of BING, interesting as always. I especially enjoyed some of the photos, including the early Rhythm Boys shot, Frank Tuttle, Father Peyton and, of course, our own David Currington. The Hopes were a photogenic couple weren't they.

Father Peyton visited Australia in the early 1950s when the Sydney radio station 2SM (owned then by the Catholic Church) promoted the Family Rosary Crusade. In one broadcast, Bing said the Rosary in a recording from the Family Theater in the USA.

These days Bing rarely rates a mention in Aussie media although the various Les Paul obituaries gave him some coverage. However, I also noted that on 31 August our national daily newspaper *The Australian* reprinted an article by John Harlow in Los Angeles from *The Sunday Times* headed "Monroe 'deluded' over affair with JFK" on the subject of a new Marilyn

Monroe biography by J Randy Taraborrelli. The biographer claimed that the affair which she had with JFK was probably limited to 'one weekend at Bing Crosby's home, maybe one night together', not 'a passionate affair' as MM allegedly imagined. That would have been at Bing's Palm Desert home in March 1962, as noted in your *Day By Day* book.

Something which I didn't mention in my emails is a weekly Sunday night broadcast by radio station WFUV in New York which might appeal to readers of BING. Titled *The Big Broadcast* and presented by Rich Conaty. It's a four-hour session featuring popular recordings from the 1920s and 1930s, with usually one or two Crosby records. I don't listen direct, instead I go to the station's audio archives on its website www.wfuv.org a few days after each session goes on air.

As I was planning my weekly MORNING MUSIC session for our local public radio station yesterday I read the notes with an old CD from the station's record

library. It's a Mosaic Records sampler of 11 jazz tracks, I think originally from Blue Note vaults of so-called transcription records. (That may have been part of Capitol Records.) The track which interested me is June Christy singing 'I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me'. More interesting, and the point of this email, is part of the liner notes which reads:

'Transcription services were a 40s phenomenon. Radio stations were still not, as a rule, playing commercial recordings. Since local stations could not afford name studio orchestras or live broadcasts, transcription services offered recordings by major artists in 15-minute chunks for radio use only and not issued on record. Capitol Records had its own parallel transcription service that recorded sessions by its artists apart from the phonograph record division. Without the pressure of recording new material written with the hit parade in mind, these sessions were usually more relaxed and featured more jazz-oriented material and performances.'

Perhaps other record companies produced similar transcription discs. I wonder if Decca did so for Bing. Perhaps the widespread broadcasting of his regular radio show meant that was not necessary, or even desirable. Any thoughts on the matter? I do know that in Australia some recordings of local artists were made for use only by radio stations.

The CD liner notes from which I quoted referred to the USA and I was surprised at the report that major radio stations there still had their own orchestras in the 1940s, the transcription discs being intended for use by the lesser stations. From my Crosby research I learned that the capitol city radio stations in Australia had their own orchestras and broadcast little recorded music in the early 1930s. I'd be surprised if any still had their own by the 1940s.

The death and funeral of Michael Jackson was a big media event here so I was motivated to write to *The Australian* contrasting it with Bing's very private burial and (respectfully) contrasting Jackson's achievements with Bing's. They published my letter and several others generally critical of the hoopla surrounding the Jackson affair. An interesting letter the next day was from a reader in Queensland who "thought the world had gone mad but was reassured when I read so many letters questioning the ridiculous adulation of Michael Jackson...I thought I knew everything about Bing Crosby, until I read [from Pascoe's letter] how quietly he departed this world."

As a friend of mine said, so many people have a financial interest in 'What can we make out of Jackson?' that a media frenzy is assured. Incidentally, my letter concluded with the statement that Bing's achievements are now largely forgotten and the question, 'Will Jackson's achievements suffer the same fate?'

To cheer myself up I played again the DVD which

George O'Reilly sent me many moons ago with a splendid selection of Bing's film and TV appearances. (Editor: See the separate article about Michael Jackson in this issue.

'The Big Broadcast' presented by Rich Conaty is indeed an excellent show and we'll give further details in the 'Bing On the Box' section.

Reverting to the transcription records matter, the USA Armed Forces Radio Service certainly had discs featuring several artists on them which had been put together just for their use. The BBC also had transcription records made for a similar purpose. Decca did not do anything with Bing although many of his KMH rehearsals were transcribed for issue on V-disc. Some of Bing's radio shows were also transcribed for charitable causes such as the American Red Cross. And of course, Bing made his own recordings for his radio show as we know from the new Mosaic set.)



Frank Startup, Cirencester, Glos., UK

Thanks very much for the new 'BING', fascinating as usual.

When Frank Sinatra died, there was an appreciation written by Elvis Costello in, I think, 'The Observer' which annoyed me greatly. In the first place, it was very dismissive of Crosby. Costello wrote something like 'at some stage in his career, Sinatra seemed to have admired Bing Crosby', as if that was some aberration which he grew out of, and in the second, he attributed many of Crosby's achievements to Sinatra. I wrote, but the paper didn't publish my letter, and, if they passed it on to Costello, he didn't reply.

A few months ago, I watched a late night television programme in which Elvis Costello interviewed Tony Bennett, and was extremely surprised to hear him express astonishment that such an important figure in popular music as Bing Crosby could have been sidelined to the extent that he has, giving Tony Bennett the opportunity to speak about Crosby's influence and

ability in very positive tones.

I wondered at the time what had happened between Sinatra's death and that interview to bring the truth to Elvis Costello's notice, and the penny dropped when I saw the wonderful Diana Krall interviewed on a news programme. The interviewer asked about influences, and, of course, mentioned Sinatra and Nat King Cole, to which Ms. Krall replied that her primary influences preceded them, naming Connee Boswell and Bing Crosby. I then remembered that Diana Krall had become Mrs. Elvis Costello, although why she married him when she could have had me is something I've never been clear about. I wonder if she would be interested in joining us in the ICC: she's clearly spreading the word.

Thanks again for the magazine and for all the hard work you do in the name of Crosby.

(Editor: Interesting that Frank should write along these lines. Kurt Schroeder emailed us some months ago about going a stage further and offering Mr. Costello honorary membership.)

Kurt Schroeder by email.

Elvis Costello, the British singer and songwriter, may be best known for his rock recordings, but he's a true musical Renaissance man, working in as many genres as Bing did in his heyday. In addition to his own songs, Mr. Costello has recorded everything from 'My Funny Valentine', to Billy Strayhorn and Charles Mingus jazz numbers, to Hank Williams country tunes, and he's also written some classical music. And, like Bing, he has performed with Count Basie himself, although that work was not committed to record. Mr. Costello also has family connections to the jazz world: his wife is Diana Krall, the well known current jazz singer and pianist, and his father, Ross MacManus, was a big band singer with the Joe Loss Orchestra in Britain back in the 1950s/60s.

But the specific reason I'd suggest Mr. Costello for membership is that he has publicly advocated the importance of Bing Crosby as a musical artist. On Mr. Costello's Sundance Channel music/talk show, "Spectacle," he recently made a strong point during an interview with Tony Bennett that Bing is the musical "father" of all singers who came after him, whether they even know about that debt. This wasn't just a passing comment; instead, Mr. Costello had prepared some brief written remarks about Bing and turned to the camera to deliver them with emphasis. Mr. Bennett, of course, agreed that Bing was the start of modern singing, and commented that it was important for all singers, himself included, to know the singers who came earlier so that they could then forge their own styles. A very interesting part of an interesting interview. One additional note about Mr. Costello that may emphasize his personal interest in Bing: according to Mr. Costello's web site, his upcoming new album "concludes with the waltz, 'Changing Partners', a song made famous by

Bing Crosby."

(Editor: Honorary membership is always a delicate matter. There is a cost to the club in sending out magazines which may or may not be read and we have tended not to pursue "celebrities" as honorary members except as the result of a personal meeting with them by a club officer (such as happened with Michael Feinstein, Rosemary Clooney and Andy Williams, for example). Having discussed the matter with Wig and Greg we decided to pass on this occasion. We should of course welcome Mr. Costello and Ms Krall with open arms if they wished to join us as 'ordinary' fee paying members.)

Maureen Solomon, by email from Toluca Lake, California, USA

Just wanted to let you know that Bob Mitchell, of the Mitchell Boys Choir fame and man who worked on two Bing movies, died yesterday. He was playing every week or so, a few blocks away from where I live and I interviewed him last year in person and once on the phone. A very nice man who kept active. What a shame.

Also, one the leading voices to promote Bing up in Spokane, Judy Blewitt, died a week ago of pneumonia from cancer treatment. She was in her early sixties and I stayed with her and her wonderful husband Steve, when the Bing theater was dedicated and also they took me to see Bing's cabin in Idaho. She was a trying to get a sign on the roadways welcoming people to Spokane, the home of Bing Crosby. I spoke with her the week before she died and she was as chipper and upbeat as usual and we talked Bing for quite some time. A very tragic loss.

(Editor: See the "Once In A While" section for further details of Bob Mitchell. Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Judy Blewitt.)

Carolyn Schneider, by email from Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

The recording that John Newton refers to in the recent issue of BING, "Love and Marriage", is very special indeed. My mother had a copy of that record which she gave to me. She said that Bing made it for Bill Morrow and his wife, Mary. Subsequently, I gifted the record to Hobie Wilson, a dedicated Bing fan and president of *Bing's Friends and Collectors Society* in California, for his 70th birthday.

John Newton, by email from Wilmington, Delaware, USA

...Now, here is something regarding Bing's parody recording of "Robins And Roses" that I think is very interesting... but, I fear, the revelation might just be a tad vulgar for inclusion in BING magazine.

Not too long ago I was playing some Bing rarities for a friend, and one of these was my test pressing of

Bing's parody recording of "Robins And Roses" (DLA-326-A recorded March 29th 1936).

As you'll recall, this was Bing's private recording during which he pokes good-natured fun at various Jewish music publishers of the time. One thing about this recording that had always puzzled me was Bing's final exclamation at the very end of the recording.

Fred Reynolds, in Part Two of his fine "The Crosby Collection" (page 34) gives a very decent account of the recording, stating that the recording ends with the lyrics "and you haven't got a chance, McTaggart". To my own ears I had always thought that the last word sounded more like "MacGregor", or something close to that, but it now appears we were both totally wrong.

When I played this record for my friend, he began laughing after the very end of the recording. When I asked what he thought was funny in the recording, he said that he was laughing at the ending of the recording, which was Bing's exclamation *in Yiddish* (!)

I asked for an explanation, and he stated that Bing's final words were a crude Yiddish phrase which it is not appropriate to translate precisely but in polite terms might be "Get Lost". Given the apparent direction of the recording, poking fun at the predominantly Jewish music publishers, this now makes a lot of sense, and sheds an entirely different light on the ending.

I'd add that I think the title of this recording might more properly be "*Robbins And Roses*", with consideration of Robbins Music publishers. And, incidentally, the "Rocco" referred to in the recording would be Rocco Vocco, one of the many interesting "characters" familiar within the music publishing industry of the time.

I hope you find this as interesting as I did, as I've always strived to understand such odd recordings as much as I enjoy simply listening to them.

Perry Huntoon, by email from Chicago, USA

With regard to the discussion in BING No. 152 about the four albums Bing made with Billy May, I have long been puzzled as to why I never took very well to the *Bing & Satchmo* album. I am a huge fan of Armstrong, having an almost complete collection of his commercial recordings and I particularly like Bing in a jazz related setting. As a result, this album should have been a natural for one of the top spots in my Bing collection, yet it isn't, despite Greg Van Beek's glowing review. In reading the commentary in BING and listening again to the album, I think I understand the problems with the recording.

As you noted, there is a lack of spontaneity suggesting the vocals were added to pre-recorded backings. I fully agree with your assessment. But, even accepting Billy May's contention that the album was recorded "live," there is another problem. The backing band is too large and the addition of a vocal chorus on some tracks just adds clutter. Dixieland works much

better in small groups, not big bands. The contrast between this album and the one Bing recorded earlier with Bob Scobey is evident. This album would have worked far better if it had been recorded with Louis and his All-Stars, a regular working band, or had Billy May just hand-picked a Dixie sized band made up of the best west coast studio musicians then available. As recorded, this album is just a "pop" album with a jazz flavor when it could have been a straight-out jazz album.

Both Bing and Louis tended to acquiesce in the studio to record producers' dictates. That often led to subpar sessions. That was evident, for instance, in the *Bing & Basie* session in 1971. At the Hofstra conference in 2002, I asked a panel about that album and Gary Giddins, in responding, nailed the problem. Neither Bing nor the Count was invited to add input for the session. They didn't pick the tunes or work out the arrangements in any way. They were just along for the ride. What should have been a memorable pairing resulted, instead, in a very ordinary album. The *Bing & Satchmo* pairing strikes me very much the same. I much prefer their pairings on Bing's radio shows from a decade earlier when they both had input into the proceedings.

Norman Wolfe, by email from Cumming, Georgia, USA

My eagerly awaited comments on the current issue!

1. We need fewer pictures of the editor and more of Catherine Zeta Jones. Nice pix of the Hopes though.

2. Whilst you handled him judiciously enough, Steven Lewis is correct. Pop singers do not outlive their generation. Crosby is a part of history. The same teenager unable to tell you who Crosby was would not know Caruso either. Same thing will happen to others. Sinatra is already well on the way to being forgotten and future generations will laugh at Elvis, his dress, hair and melodramatic style will be a garish oddity of a forgotten period in music, like Jolson in blackface.

Painters and sculptors are not imprisoned by time because their works are not emblematic of any specific era. Picasso is timeless while Crosby becomes quaint. Pop singers, in particular Crosby but now Elvis too, see entire styles of music die with them. Sinatra is less vulnerable here because he did not create a school as Jolson, Crosby and Elvis did and see it confined to history along with them. Their recorded work remains accessible but there is no compulsion for current generations to access it because, for better or worse, music has moved on. Crosby music is no longer written, let alone sung or recorded. Yes, you can find it, if you try, just as you can find Alexander Dumas, but you are more likely to buy John Grisham or Nora Roberts.

I note in your *Trading Post*, Crosby collectors no longer trying to sell but merely seeking someone to take collections off their hands. These collections have been

inherited, in most cases, and nobody wants to throw them away but, alas, the market has shrunk. The ICC will not outlast its present membership. All these movements to "assure Bing's rightful place" etc etc are harmless but ineffective. Time marches on.

3. I like the stuff Maureen Solomon does and meant to write you about it in the last issue. The way *Going Hollywood* was presented was most impressive. I felt the same way about the review of the "Sinatra In Hollywood" book in BING #151 which posed the question of whether Crosby ever sang TO anyone. How intriguing and you know I appreciate original thinking. Citing "True Love" is such an excellent example. There he is with this gorgeous blonde draped all over him and his eyes are fixed on the stars as he tries to analyze why he boogeyed the hole. If I disagree (and I am not at all certain I do) my examples would be "Pennies from Heaven" to Edith Fellowes; "That Sly Old Gentleman" to Baby Sandy and the Irish lullaby to Barry Fitzgerald. Excellent article though. The kind we need.

4. The nightclub scene featuring Kathryn Crosby, as described, sounded charming.

5. With one notable exception, the photos were excellent; I particularly liked the one of him in Indian headdress, the ones of the boys at Hayden Lake and Dennis, Phil and Lindsay together. That one made me sad. Liked the one with Carole Lombard though I never really liked her. The family singing "White Christmas" was nice; ditto the Rhythm Boys although I am not sure anyone was ever that young. Loved the one with the Andrews Sisters at their first recording session with Bing.

6. I can't add anything to the Billy May debate. It's been too long since I played any of those tracks. I always liked his orchestra and thought he had a distinctive sound when distinctive sounds and theme songs had pretty much died with network radio. I remember my impression of "El Senor Bing" was that I did not like the concept but thought some of the individual sides were excellent. Wish they had been presented differently. I deplore it when the band gets in the way of the singer which is why I always have hated the sides with Buddy Bregman. Marvelous singing all but drowned out.

7. Overall, the magazine is excellent and, my kidding you aside, you should be most proud of it and your individual efforts. The production values are very good, the stock high grade and the color reproduction splendid. I think the quality of the articles is improving as well. At least it seems so to me. The high quality enables the magazine to hold the remainder of the tattered and aging Crosby brigade together where a less slick or more amateurish product might not. By looking impressive and reading well, it presents an impressive face for the club. Members are able to display it and point to it with pride. That is highly significant. Without it, our rallying point would vanish.

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK

BING 152 met your usual high standard. As you asked for opinions about the Longines set, here's mine. In fact, I bought both the original issue and the expanded one. None of the tracks have been issued on an authorised CD but the sound quality of the LPs is excellent. I can imagine any remastering for a digital issue will produce a top quality product in technical terms. As for the Crosby songs, they might just as well have been included on a box set "The standard songs that were made for me to sing but on which I missed out" rather than the Longines title "The songs I love". Bing's voice in 1965 wasn't what it was thirty years earlier but the maturity he brought to ballads like "All Alone" and "What'll I do" made the wait worthwhile. I also believe that the songs on the Longines set were a true Crosby selection. He'd tackled them less as medleys on his Warner Bros. "On the Happy Side" album and three years later did them justice.

Dave Duncan, Sydney, NSW, Australia (as seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum)

I just read the very interesting article written by Lindsay Crosby in 1959 that was featured in the latest BING magazine. This article is a great insight on 'Bing the parent' with Lindsay detailing the care that Bing took with the four of his sons. I always thought that maybe Lindsay had taken his own life whilst feeling resentment towards his father for the reported 'stern upbringing' that he experienced from Bing. This now clears things up and spells out very clearly that Bing was a good father - that Lindsay didn't feel at all that Bing had failed him or had not spent enough time with him. Whatever drove Lindsay to commit suicide had nothing to do with Bing - he was fighting his own demons which only he and those close to him would ever know - but it wasn't because Bing wasn't a good father. It's a pity articles like this couldn't have been re-printed when Gary's book was released. Articles like this could have reduced the amount of negative gossip.

Neil B C, Australia (as seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum)

Congratulations to Malcolm, Greg, and all who contribute to make every BING magazine an enjoyable and informative read. However, everyone has really outdone themselves with the summer 2009 issue. Some of the highlights for me were:

- Hearing that 'Seasons', other LPs between 56-77, and the original Bing & Buddy Cole tracks from Bing's 1950's CBS radio show will hopefully all see the light of day soon.

- The article 'Just A Prayer Away', which covered Bing's affiliation with Fr. Patrick Peyton and the Family Theatre organisation (does anyone know whether the 1952 short 'Crusade For Prayer' is available anywhere?)

- Lindsay's 1959 article 'You're Not A Flop Dad', which gives a nice balanced account on Bing as a father

- The 1975 'Australian Women's Weekly' article showing Bing in his later years (also nice to see a home-grown 'Aussie' article - along with a photo earlier in the

magazine of Australian Representative David Currington)

- The follow up article on Bing's rarest recordings
- Plus all of the usual articles we look forward to every issue

Considering that Bing passed away over 30 years ago and has been pretty much forgotten (or at the very least not regularly thought of) by most people, it is amazing that such an entertaining, high quality magazine can be produced so consistently.

Thanks again and may the BING magazine and the ICC continue for many years to come.

Alan Matheson, by email from Vancouver, Canada.

First of all, congratulations on another excellent edition of BING magazine. There were lots of great articles (especially the reprint of the Lindsay Crosby and Australian Women's Weekly articles and the John Newton piece!) but I was quite surprised to see the internet correspondence between Steve, Jarbie and I regarding "El Senor Bing" inside the magazine. Glad that our comments and back 'n' forth were interesting to you and I hope that your readers will think so, too.



Ironically, I just returned from three weeks in Finland and Estonia where I was vacationing as well as playing and recording. In Tallinn (Estonia), I found a Russian (Melodiya) LP pressing of "El Senor Bing" simply labelled "Bing Crosby" (in Cyrillic) in a used book store. I had to buy this, if only because the cover features an "alternate" photo of Bing that must have been taken at the time of the "Seasons" album cover shoot! This puts this version of "El Senor Bing" from

sometime in the late 1970's (there's no date on this LP). Interesting that Melodiya chose to issue this album in Russia. The back cover states that it's licensed through Polydor which would have held the rights to the original MGM recording. Although my ability to read Cyrillic is limited, Billy May does get credited with the conducting and arranging.

Like you, I do find lots to enjoy musically on this LP but wish that Bing had done full length versions of some of these songs elsewhere.

LEEDS 2009

Bob Halls sends his report on the 44th Annual Dinner & Meeting held on Sunday 4th October 2009

Is it really a year ago when I sat at the computer, nervously preparing my first Leeds report from notes hastily scribbled, trying to keep up with the pace of the meeting and wondering how on earth I had managed to write ten pages of almost illegible scrawl which needed to be transcribed into something readable for the magazine? Well I've done it again, but this time I've ended up with thirteen pages! Well as a retired police inspector, I'll stick to my old motto and the first rule of management, find someone to blame! So Malcolm Macfarlane gets that accolade for including enough in the programme to make even a professional secretary quake in fear! And to make it even more challenging he arranged the whole thing to take place in semi-darkness, which left me writing words over those I had already written, ending up with what looked like Big Croby, Bol Dope and Sally Davis Julier! Seriously though, another 'perfect day', the title of the last Bing song of the day. Quite how Malcolm and Michael Crampton manage to come up with so much material I can't imagine. All I have to do now is sum it up.

Introduction – Michael Crampton.

The meeting started at the earlier time of 2pm and opened with Michael asking for a time of silence and reflection for club members who have unfortunately passed away since the last meeting, mentioning in particular **Charlie Tupper** and **Arnold Pope**. I have only been coming for three years, but I soon realised the impact Arnold had on the Leeds event, his annual quiz bemusing even the most ardent Bing Crosby fan. It was decided, in honour of Arnold, not to hold the quiz this year. I had the feeling, talking to members who knew him well, that something really crucial would be missing, Arnold himself. During the silence I had a picture forming in my mind of Arnold arriving at Heaven's gates, perhaps to be greeted by Bing, with the legions of deceased Crosby fans familiar with his Leeds quizzes all running for cover! It's rather a lovely thought perhaps, an annual Global Club Crosby meeting in Heaven, with Bing as Master of Ceremonies? There

would be quite a few attendees, far more than at Leeds!

Michael welcomed those attending for the first time, including **Perry Huntoon** all the way from the USA, **Alex Schicke and his mum** from Germany, **Lars and Maria Roth** from Sweden, **Tony Strong** from Luton and **Ron Field**, an Australian living in America, who will feature later in the report. Ron opened with 'Call me an Aussie, but don't mention the Ashes'. I can't think what he means!

Michael formally thanked **Malcolm Macfarlane** for his continued work and meticulous planning for this event and for his immense contribution to producing BING magazine, Michael echoing the thoughts of the members, 'Where would we be without it!' He also reminded us that the team which heads up the International Club Crosby is now 20 years old, and apart from those who have left us, remains the same individuals, including Wig Wiggins and David Currington, the USA and Australian connections. It's worth remembering that these members have tirelessly worked for the continuance of the club, notwithstanding their regular day jobs and family commitments. Michael commented that, on occasions when members had become irritated because of various unavoidable delays, he wondered if they thought they were contacting a club office with lines of secretaries etc, rather than his private residence, from where all the voluntary work is carried out. Food for thought perhaps!

George O'Reilly from Ireland was then singled out for thanks, George, who really is a great guy had come with free copies of his CD, 'Voice of the Century' for all members at the conference, plus the promise of his Bing centred DVD *A Little Bit of Irish*, free to anyone who would like a copy sent to them.

Messages and Interviews.

Eddie Rice with John Scott Trotter – 1966.

Malcolm played a recording of Eddie Rice's interview with John Scott Trotter back in 1966. This was really interesting, especially for recent members like myself, made more poignant by a slide show prepared by Malcolm of related photos of Bing with John Scott Trotter, who made reference to Bing's appreciation of his UK fan base and how he never took success for granted. JST also referred to Bing's then visit to Dublin, which of course featured George O'Reilly, with photos to back it up.

Message from Bing – 1968.

As was the case at last year's meeting when one of Bing's old messages to the club was played, this was where I really regretted not being a member during Bing's lifetime. If only I had known! This one was from 1968, where a very fluent Crosby just launched into a long recorded greeting to members, as if he was sitting in the same room. The sense of intimacy was incredible and makes nonsense of adverse comments about the

singer's coolness with others. He talked about his family and referred to his children as 'the little monsters', about how little golf he had played in that year, concentrating on his shooting hobby. He mentioned doing 16 TV shows in 36 weeks with Jackie Gleason, Dean Martin, Andy Williams, Bob Hope and others. He went on to talk about his impending visit to the UK, with the races being one of his main goals, plus a recent personal dedication at Gonzaga University, a slide to accompany it from Malcolm of Bing in full University garb, hat and all! He finished by wishing the meeting 'all the best to my friends in the UK from the whole family.'

Interview with Nathaniel Crosby – 2009.

Malcolm managed to track down Nathaniel during a visit to the USA this year, where amongst other topics, his performance with his father at the Palladium in 1976 was discussed. Their duet of 'Row Row Row Your Boat' needed endless re-starts due to Nathaniel's feigned inability to co-ordinate the round. He talked warmly about his father and highlighted the fact that broadcasting companies tend to play his Christmas songs for a couple of weeks, then nothing. Asked about the future of the Crosby franchise, he said that 'the family needs to attract capital to keep dad's memory alive and that it would be nice to have the record companies on our side, rather than as foes'!

Time Capsule, Vancouver – 1948.

This was a film of Bing in Vancouver from a time capsule sealed in 1948, which was recently opened, Crosby being a guest of honour being welcomed by the mayor and being entertained by a group of red Indians who gave him the honouree title of 'Chief Thunder Voice'. Well I suppose there are worse names! Our man also appeared at the wheel of a rather large earth mover - very trusting of the Canadians I thought!



Bing and his opponent J. K. Wilson shelter from the rain at St. Andrews.

Pathe News Clip and January 1947 Photoplay Awards.

These were clips of Bing playing in the British Open Amateur Golf Championship at St. Andrews in Scotland in 1950. Singer Donald Peers was also seen playing on the same day.

This was followed by a clip from the Photoplay Awards ceremony in 1947 when Bing picked up the Gold Medal for 'People's choice of favourite actor of the year'. Hope is mentioned in the sequence with Bing referring to Bob's absence with 'flu and saying "Hope took a turn for the nurse, sorry worse."

Interview, David Currington – 2009.

Our Australian co-ordinator, David Currington made a visit to his aunt in Wisbech this year and Malcolm caught up with him and recorded a lovely interview, despite lawn mowers and passing cars making every attempt to disrupt the conversation. David seems a really nice guy, very relaxed about his efforts on behalf of the club and who at the age of 58 years (same as me), started his interest in Crosby just as he died. He holds regular meetings at his home in Australia, with 8 to 12 people attending Bing based sessions in an informal setting. He even sang a song for us on film. It's a pity he couldn't be with us at Leeds, hopefully one for the future.

Malcolm then showed a series of **show clips**, which included bits from the Jack Benny Show of 1954, a Dinah Shore Show duet from 1963, the 1973 Christmas Show (Bing frolicking in the snow with a rather large snowman), excerpts from the 1975 Parkinson Show which included the "Play a Simple Melody" duet with son, Harry, originally sung with son Gary some years earlier and Bing narrating for the National Wildlife Federation making an appeal to save America's wetlands. The sequence finished with a duet with Vera Lynn in 1975. It's amazing really when one considers Vera has just topped the album charts in 2009, 34 years later.

Interview with Gord Atkinson – 2009

Gord Atkinson is no stranger to Crosby fans and has been as active as anyone in promoting Bing's music and career. Last year I addressed the meeting and highlighted the need to record Bing memories and recollections and as a result triggered a chain of returns from members numbering fifty plus, one package containing five pages of information. Consequently my intention to collate the returns became a much bigger task than anticipated. So watch this space, I am hoping to publish in the next few months.

Malcolm mentioned my words of last year and stated that he bore this in mind when visiting Gord at his home in Canada this year, recording a film of Gord's Bing memories, and what a host of recollections they are, and what a lovely man Gord is. This was one of the highlights of the day for me and the full interview is far too extensive to include in this report. Hopefully it could

be transcribed as a separate magazine article.

Gord's association with Crosby begins in 1945 when Gord was in the Canadian Service, helping with security at a golf match in which Bing was playing. Gord managed to meet him and it resulted in Bing arranging a photographer for a photo to be taken of Gord and Bing together. Gord never forgot that gesture and a very close association gradually built up over the years as Gord's own broadcasting career developed. He related a number of stories and described Crosby as 'a man who was not a backslapper, but showed affection for people in other ways' and said referring to the 'Crosby Years Interviews' at Bing's Hillsborough home, 'I couldn't get over the intimacy, how relaxed he was', and 'he seemed amazed, as was Bob Hope at my knowledge of his career'. Gord finished with a message to the Leeds meeting, saying 'It's a great pleasure to speak to those great Crosby fans across the pond' and said how much he would love to be there. Now there's a thought! That would cut Malcolm's workload down a bit eh!

The Edsel Show – The Timex Show - Happy Holidays with Bing & Frank.

Excerpts from these shows were shown, Crosby, Hope, Sinatra and Martin doing their thing with a good degree of self-indulgence, as only they could.

The Evening Meal.

As is customary we broke for the meal, a time for exchanging views and recollections and a time I particularly enjoy. My thanks to Wally Oldfield for inviting me onto his table, where a fine group of individuals made the meal an absolute delight. Again the standard of the food was very good, with a selection of roast meats, fish, salads and terribly fattening deserts.

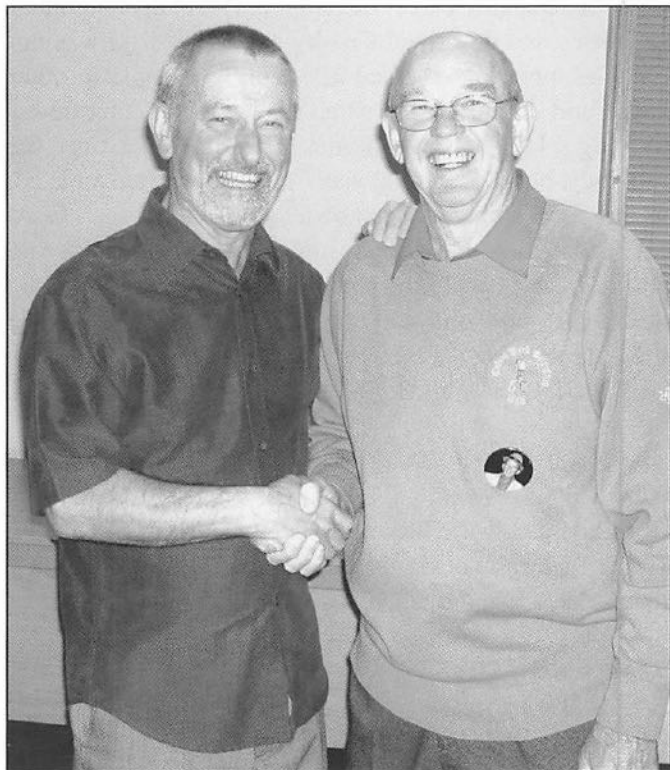
Presentation – Ron Field. 'Who Dares Wins'

I gave this section the above title, mainly because Ron, as previously reported, an Aussie living in America, went where others might have feared to tread, especially when one considers Crosby's need for privacy and reported coolness to people who took liberties.

Ron must rate as one of Bing's most dedicated and energetic fans, prepared to go anywhere at any time to see, and where possible, meet him in person. As with Gord's story, Ron's recollections would make a great story for the magazine and it's difficult to do it justice in this report. However along with footage of Ron at Gonzaga in 2003 and coverage on US TV, we were treated to an array of recollections of chance meetings and occasions where he used every trick in the book to meet his man, including timing his round of golf to coincide with Crosby's and getting an invitation to stay with him on the course.

Somehow he managed to get an invitation from Bing to visit his brothers Bob and Larry in Los Angeles and years later persuaded a hotel receptionist to put a phone

call straight through to Bing's room. Discovering and photographing him in a shop doorway smoking a cigarette, only to find later that the film hadn't revolved in the camera and offering to caddy for Bing's son Nathaniel, which was accepted. Ron attended the Palladium shows in 1976 and 1977, as well as meeting Kathryn, Harry, Nathaniel and Howard Crosby on later occasions.



Michael Crampton welcomes Ron Field to the meeting for the first time.

His lasting memory is when he left a message for Bing to ring him back about a golf match, not really expecting one, he received a call back, if only to decline the invitation. But as Ron said 'That was Bing, an ordinary guy.'

Auctioneer – Malcolm Macfarlane.

Perhaps Malcolm should take this up professionally! Somehow he managed to extract £90 for club funds from members for a range of goodies, including paintings, posters, adverts, framed discs, tapes of shows and later another £25 for his own DVD of film clips (which I was outbid on).

Hollywood Palace Shows and others – provided by Greg Van Beek.

This contained songs from various shows, including Bing singing and acting the clown with Jimmy Durante, Dean Martin, Bob Hope, Louis Armstrong and others, some of it serious, some of it hilarious. Perhaps it was me with my warped sense of perception, but just how many girls with long bare legs and skimpy clothes did they need for those shows? At one stage, as girls

launched themselves at the stars, putting hats on them, taking them off, handing them water, wigs and great hugs of affection, I'm sure Dean Martin's eyes were darting in so many different directions he nearly lost his balance. I would love to be able to speak to any of the surviving women from those shows; I bet they would have some stories to tell!

In the sequence we saw Dino looking very uncomfortable sitting beside a real live cow, simulating milking, with Crosby looking at home and obviously well versed in animal management, with the dialogue:-

Dean: 'Do bulls give milk?'

Crosby: 'Only if it's for a very good cause.'



Bing also appeared with a long wig and guitar, imitating Tiny Tim, singing 'Tiptoe Through the Tulips', glad he didn't do it very often! Bob Hope stole the show, when in a duet with Bing and dressed as a Texan cowboy, came out with the words "I'm so Texan I wear cactus underwear." Painful!

On the serious side, there were some poignant moments amid the fun and frolics, notably the realisation that when Crosby and Dean Martin's voices blended, notably on slow ballads a very special sound was produced. Likewise with Louis Armstrong, what relaxation and understanding of each other's styles! Personally, seeing those duets at the same time as those with Sinatra, I'm not sure if Bing was as relaxed and comfortable with him. Just a personal observation and I might be wrong! Something else came through from this sequence, which is made all the more acute seeing them together, is the almost 'dairy cream' feel of Bing's voice singing 'Both Sides Now' on one of the shows and the

power late in life whilst on stage singing 'At My Time of Life'.

The Buddy Cole Sessions – 1954-56

The list goes on, hopefully you are still awake! Bing Crosby Enterprises recently had a dig-about in Kathryn's cellar and located tapes of the Buddy Cole Sessions and Judy Schmid sent samples to Malcolm for the meeting. Examples were played and wow, what quality! And how commanding and mellow Bing's voice sounded on the recordings! Apparently there are up to 160 songs, which will be released as a box set in November of this year. The only down point is that we are talking \$119 for the set. Malcolm said that the club would purchase sets in bulk for UK members after canvassing orders. No doubt more details will appear in the magazine.

Film Clips – DVD produced by Malcolm.

It's difficult to express on paper, the magnitude of what Malcolm had prepared here and if anything sums up the dedication to the club and Crosby's memory by Malcolm, then this is it. I cannot imagine how many hours it took to put this wonderful and extremely professional collection together. I made a bid for it at the end of the night, but was outbid. Now I wish I had kept bidding, it was a masterpiece. I forget who won it, but I'm open to offers!

Again the sequence, films, songs and co-stars contained on the collection could form a magazine contribution. It must be one of the most comprehensive DVD compilations ever produced. I would love to itemize every part of it, but it would fill the magazine, and this report is long enough anyway. The two-hour DVD showed chronological excerpts from various Crosby films, with songs, many very well known, but some little gems which get little play time. I collect autographs of Bing's leading ladies in films and have acquired quite a number over the years. The trouble is I get confused and sometimes Jane Wyman becomes Mary Martin, Kitty Carlisle becomes Mary Carlisle and so on. I had the same problem here, but what fun going through my collection against the films when I got home. Bert Bishop helped me on the day, but I registered Joan Bennett, Gail Patrick, Mary Martin, Joan Caulfield, a very young Carolyn Grimes, Joan Fontaine, the lovely Rhonda Fleming, Jane Wyman, Grace Kelly, Mitzi Gaynor and Jeanne Marie. There were more, but I lost count!

Probably the most significant point for me was when 'Mr Booze' from *Robin and the Seven Hoods* was played, with Bing central to the song, with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Junior flanking him. There is a point where Bing booms out 'who's to blame?' Then the whole assembly answers 'Mr Booze'. But albeit this wasn't the most scintillating of Crosby's film achievements, and he only played a supporting role to the Rat Pack, in this song I really believe he put the

big three in their place and showed why they all aspired at some stage to be 'like Bing'. Listen to the song again, if possible whilst looking at the film sequence and see what I mean.

The End of the Day.

So to the end of another 'perfect day' as the last song, with that title was played and members said their goodbyes again, with another meeting eagerly anticipated next year. Sadly each year more members 'miss the cut', moving on to pastures new, as in the case of Arnold Pope, a sad consequence of the passing of the years. But with people like Malcolm, Michael, Wig, David, Bert, Gord, George, Ron and a host of others about, we can still enjoy and remember Bing Crosby, the 'Voice of the Century'. The warm round of applause, first for Malcolm in putting the meeting content together and then for Michael for his endless and often thankless task as secretary filled the room and off we went, into the October night.

Bob Halls

Editor: Thank you Bob for a most comprehensive report. The event seemed to go off all right and it was nice to receive several letters and emails expressing appreciation for the day. Amongst those who wrote were:

Ken Shaw, Hessle, North Humberside

A few lines to say how enjoyable the Leeds meeting and get-together was. I also know that all the members really do appreciate the huge effort you and Michael, and the team, put into compiling and producing the wonderful material both shown and made available. The excellent two hour compilation of Bing was typical of the time consuming effort and care taken to compile and produce.

We all hope that the meetings will continue but we also understand that a diminishing membership over the years will make this increasingly difficult.

It was pleasant seeing old friends again and meeting the new ones. I can only hope that they all go home and spread the gospel of Bing.

Trevor Wagstaff, Hornchurch, Essex

A few lines of thanks for the splendid Weetwood occasion last Sunday. Greatly enjoyed by the three from Essex! Lovely presentation in excellent picture quality, nice interview with Gord Atkinson, and lots of stuff I hadn't seen before.

Nice meeting several people from abroad i.e. Ron Field who was very interesting. I liked your interview with him on last Sunday's "Anne Hopper Show" along with Bert Bishop's "4 of a kind" linked to money.

George Patmore, Shropshire

Just a note to record our personal vote of thanks for your work in presenting a very enjoyable programme at Leeds. The "icing on the cake" was the all colour

Hollywood Palace extracts. If ever such become available on UK region DVDs please advise via BING so that I can add to my collection. Marie was able to have a good natter with Pat and Judith and other "other halves" at the meeting.

Maria Roth, Sweden – by email to Michael Crampton.

We just wanted to say thank you very much for a delightful evening in Leeds! We both enjoyed it very much, and if you decide to go on, we will certainly do our best to be there next year! Please extend our warmest regards to Malcolm and thank him for the interesting interviews and material that he put together.

My husband has been a devoted Bing fan for many years, since the 1970s and he has actually hosted a couple of local radio shows in Sweden (Malmö jazz radio) and even participated in a local TV show talking about Bing twice. For me Bing came in to my life when I met Lars...and even though I knew who Bing was I had no idea that he had such a long career and that there are so many radio shows, TV shows, movies, books, records etc to collect until Lars...and Bing...moved into my apartment!

We are a bit far away from you...and I don't know if or how we could help, but if there is anything we can do for the club or in any way help you with the work, please let us know.

Bert Bishop, by email

Wanted to say how much I enjoyed the meeting and to thank you for yet another well presented occasion. One of the most gratifying things about it is being in the presence of fellow enthusiasts, which greatly enhances

the films and music we see and hear. True, most of us have quite a lot of this material, though not all – but do we ever actually get it down from the shelves as frequently as we ought to do? And if we do viewing it on our own or with partners less dedicated than ourselves, it is never quite the same as sharing the experience as we do at Leeds or the occasional private meeting between friends. For that alone I thank you; your efforts are much appreciated.

Colin Stewart, by email

Indeed what a swell party it was and all thanks to your great efforts in putting the show together and a wonderful selection of video and film. It was fun meeting new faces to me from the irrepressible George O'Reilly to our overseas visitors – how do we inspire a British version of the enthusiastic Alex Schicke to join the club!

(Editor: Alex Schicke is a German student who is also a keen member of the German Sinatra Society which led to a lot of leg-pulling when he appeared in his Sinatra fan club tee shirt! He wrote to us too.)

Alex Schicke, by email

My mum and I want to thank you for the marvellous Crosby weekend. Especially that you also organised a wonderful dinner for our new members on Saturday. You and Michael organised a marvellous event. Thank you very much for the great program. I for one enjoyed the marvellous Crosby TV section. Your tapes are in such good condition! I will wear the Crosby badge at our next Sinatra meeting.

BING ON THE BOX

TV highlights

USA & Canada

Films shown in recent months include:

Going Hollywood	TCM
Here Comes the Groom	TCM
High Society	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
Stagecoach	AMC
The Country Girl	TCM
The Greatest Show on Earth	TCM
The Road to Hong Kong	HBOSge and Cinemax

Thank goodness for TCM! Nice to see *Stagecoach* getting another airing. This film has, I feel, been unjustly overlooked over the years. *TV Guide* had this to say about the recent showing.

"...But the big surprise in this film was Crosby,



Bing fights off the Indians alongside a wounded Red Buttons.

portraying the alcoholic doctor with humor and sensitivity. Crosby had won an Oscar nomination as an alcoholic singer in *The Country Girl* 12 years before and this role was a small reprise of that memorable performance."

Pity the film doesn't get shown in the UK.

USA Radio

Turning to radio, the **BingCrosby.com** site carries some interesting old radio broadcasts and in August / September there was a 1947 "Here's To Veterans" show for our entertainment. This was a 15-minute transcribed show supported by the Veterans Administration using songs from the Philco series. Bing sang "I Do, Do, Do Like You", "It's a Good Day" (with Peggy Lee), and "The Anniversary Song". Peggy Lee was featured with her version of "I'll Close My Eyes" Bing was also heard promoting GI Insurance. Our thanks to Bing Crosby Enterprises for unearthing this rare item. As we go to press, the website has two of the 1954-56 CBS radio shows for our listening pleasure.

"**The Original Bing Crosby Radio Show**" is still being heard at 8:30PM Eastern every Sunday night - with a repeat Wednesday nights at 10:00PM Eastern - on Sirius XM Satellite Radio Channel 4 - the 40s Channel.

In the *Letters* section, Graham Pascoe mentioned **The Big Broadcast** presented by **Rich Conaty** from station WFUV in New York. The show is broadcast on Sunday nights from 8p.m. to Midnight and Rich spins classic jazz and pop tunes of the 1920s and '30s with Bing putting in a regular appearance. The show has been running for over 30 years! WFUV is a non-commercial, listener-supported public radio station, licensed to Fordham University for 60 years. It serves nearly 350,000 listeners each week in the New York area and thousands more worldwide on the web. You can hear it on 90.7 FM or on the Internet. The "Listen Again" feature can be found at:

www.wfuv.org/audio/archive/index.html

Greg Van Beek continues with his monthly hour-long radio specials entitled *Nostalgia Radio Time* for 1420 AM 'The Breeze', WJUB radio in Plymouth, WI. He includes Bing whenever possible and his October programme saluted the centennial of Benny Goodman with some of his greatest hit recordings, along with a complete vintage radio broadcast of the Camel Caravan from January 3, 1939. Benny hosted the show with guests Johnny Mercer and Martha Tilton. WJUB is working on a streaming audio feed for the Internet, and it hopes to have it in place soon.

Finally, we must not forget **Arne Fogel** who hosts "THE BING SHIFT" on Saturday nights at 7pm CST on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. His show can be heard internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website at:

<http://jazz88.mpls.k12.mn.us/>.

UK

After our relative famine of recent years, it was a real delight to see *The Bells of St. Mary's* screened by Film4 on August 28. Although I have it on video and DVD and have seen it many times, your editor sat and viewed it all the way through and as usual I was moved by the story.

I watched Bing and Ingrid Bergman with fresh eyes and their acting really was superb. This classic is now 64 years old and probably the modern reaction would be to disagree with Bing's policy of letting everyone pass the exams regardless of their results (although there is a suspicion that this is happening in the UK nowadays). Also Bing's praise of a boy for fighting would probably thought to be politically incorrect today. But that ending is still a wonderful tear-jerking scene which takes some beating.



**The ailing Sister Benedict confronts
Father O'Malley**

On August 1, BBC broadcast live on BBC Two, BBC HD and BBC Radio 3 "A Celebration of Classic MGM Film Musicals". Songs from unforgettable movie classics, including *The Wizard of Oz*, *Meet Me in St Louis*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *High Society*, *Gigi* and *Singin' in the Rain* were performed by conductor John Wilson and his hand-picked Orchestra. Amazingly, although all the original orchestral parts were said to be lost when MGM destroyed its music library to make way for a car park, Wilson succeeded in reconstructing the scores by painstakingly transcribing each soundtrack by ear. He was joined by singers from the classical and musical theatre worlds, as well as by the elite Maida Vale Singers. The particular interest for Crosby fans was a segment covering *High Society* and "Well, Did You Evah?" was sung by Seth MacFarlane (as Sinatra - no relation to your editor) and Curtis Stigers (as Bing). They were absolutely note and word perfect when compared with the original and it was great to hear. We even got the "You must be one of the newer fellas" phrase.

Friday, October 9 was designated **Andy Williams Night** by BBC4. Andy (now aged 81) has been in the UK promoting his autobiography and doing some singing. The evening's entertainment included an hour-long programme called "Duets: The Andy Williams Show" featuring Andy at his peak singing with stars such as Shirley Bassey, The Supremes, Johnny Cash and Ella Fitzgerald on his TV show. Towards the end, Andy introduced a clip of himself and Bing doing a medley from a 1966 show. Saying "I was a big fan of his" and

recalling that, at the age of 14, he had recorded "Swinging on a Star" with Bing. Andy indicated what a thrill it was to sit on a stool next to Bing. Andy finished with the words, "He was certainly cool, he was it, there wasn't anyone bigger than Bing." This programme was followed by a re-run of the 2004 show "Kings of Cool: The Crooners" which looked at Bing, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole Tony Bennett and, of course, Andy Williams. For further details, see BING #137, page 43.



Andy and Bing rehearse for The Andy Williams Show

Although **Bert Bishop** no longer writes this column, he is still contributing and he spotted that a good minute plus of Bing's recording of "Busy Doing Nothing" was featured in a McDonald's ad during the *Pride Of Britain* awards in October. He also noticed a couple dancing to Bing singing "The Anniversary Waltz" on *Eastenders* and "Gone Fishin'" was heard during Griff Rhys Jones tour of British rivers. Bing pops up all over the place!

UK radio

BBC Radio2 also featured Andy Williams and this was on Friday October 16 in *Liza Tarbuck in the Lounge with Andy Williams*. Andy again mentioned Bing in glowing terms as he described making "Swinging on a Star" with him and we were then treated to the record itself. So our Mr. Crosby got some useful exposure from Andy's visit to our shores.

A two-part BBC Radio2 series in August called '**UNCLE SAM GOES POP: the story of V-Discs**' featured Bing in its publicity but unfortunately promised more than it delivered. Grammy winner Patti Austin told the story of a short period in the 1940s when an unholy alliance of recording artists, the army and the unions

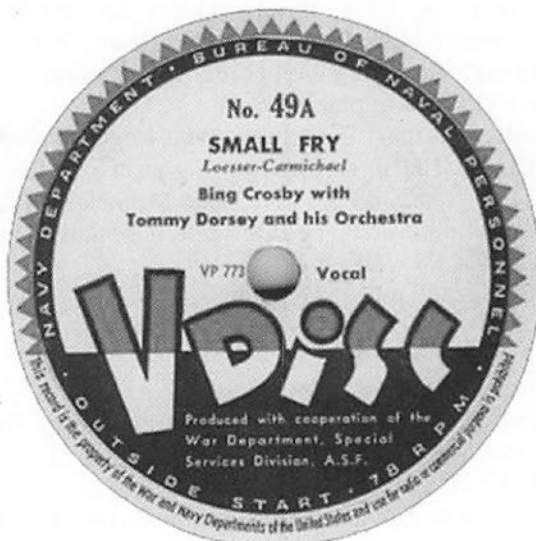
enabled the US Government to become the world's most successful record company.

In 1941, leader of the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) James Caesar Petrillo, told the major record companies of the day - RCA Victor, Decca and Columbia - that unless his union members received higher royalty payments, they would not produce any more recordings after 31 July 1942. The record companies refused, hoping a strike would be short. It lasted for two years!

Army Lieutenant George Robert Vincent, a sound engineer who had learnt his trade at the Edison Labs in New York and helped establish Armed Forces Radio, knew the soldiers longed for new music. He suggested that the military start a record company - V-Discs - and convinced the AFM to grant a special waiver to record for the army with a number of provisions: the recordings should not be used commercially or sold; and all V-Discs should be destroyed after the war. So on 27 October 1943 artists had an outlet - as well as a guaranteed, receptive, enthusiastic worldwide audience of soldiers and sailors.

When the USA entered the war, the nascent record label was faced with a problem: the supply of shellac, used to make 78 rpm records ceased. After much testing, Vincent found that a combination of two resins - one of which was already used in the manufacture of "rubber" dinghies - created a playable and sturdy record. V-Discs commissioned over 900 special recordings of the most successful and commercial artists of the day - the only record of great pop music during the ban. Vincent received the Legion of Merit award for his services and Steve Sholes, who produced and oversaw many of the recordings, returned to RCA where he recommended that they sign a kid named Elvis Presley!

After the programme ended, the AFM agreement was honoured and original masters were destroyed; leftover V-Discs at bases and on ships were discarded; and the FBI confiscated and destroyed some that servicemen smuggled home. One Los Angeles record company employee even did some jail time - for the illegal possession of over 2500 V-Discs. Nevertheless V-Discs' artistic legacy is not lost. The Library of Congress retains a complete set of V-Discs and several compilations of V-Disc records are commercially available today.



But what about Bing? Well, he duly appeared in the second episode and was introduced as "The biggest recording star of the age." We were told that most of his V-Discs came from his radio shows but that he took his radio show on the road to entertain troops. Not strictly correct as his radio show – the Kraft Music Hall – was always broadcast from Los Angeles. To illustrate Bing's V-Disc output we had a brief extract from what sounded like the commercial issue of "White Christmas", a portion of a medley including "Any Bonds Today" / "This Is The Army, Mr. Jones" from *Blue Skies* and then a genuine V-Disc of Bing singing "Small Fry" accompanied by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. The only problem was that the latter item was described as "Pennies from Heaven" and that it came from a Carnegie Hall recording, neither of which was correct!

The National Presenters

The BBC has several national networks which can reach 60 million people in the UK before adding in those who can listen on the Internet. Several of our members work very hard to have Bing played by the presenters on the national networks and this effort has paid off in recent months with **David Jacobs** in particular delivering the goods. The early Bing tracks do not really fit into David's late Sunday night Radio2 programme of mainly lush stereo songs but he picked up songs such as "Under Paris Skies", "The Second Time Around", "On a Slow Boat to China" (with Rosie) and "Incurably Romantic". The latter song he said incorrectly was recorded in London with Malcolm Lockyer but we'll forgive him for that. David surpassed himself in his broadcast of September 20 when he made three songs from Bing's radio shows his *common denominator* section featuring "I Don't Know Why" (with Lauren Bacall), "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top" (with Helen O'Connell) and "Till We Meet Again" (with Patti Page). Another song featured by David and also by several local presenters was "Deep in the Heart of Texas" which was on an album of songs banned by the BBC. The reason for this song being banned from broadcast during working hours was because workers were banging their tools to the rhythm and damaging machines!

Russell Davies celebrates the art, craft and inspiration of the popular song with particular emphasis on the songwriters in his Radio2 show on Sunday evenings. He likes to use a Bing song to illustrate his point when he can and this time his choices have been as diverse as "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "I've A Shooting Box in Scotland." Russell was one of several broadcasters making a tribute to the late Les Paul and using the groaner's "It's Been a Long, Long Time" as part of it. The new Perry Como book received a nice mention from Russell on his show of October 18 with a nod to BING magazine and the ICC too.

Desmond Carrington has returned to the Bing fold a little more frequently of late on his Tuesday evening show and he too has roamed over the years from "Wistful and Blue" and "Happy Feet" to "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening."

The local presenters

The BBC has forty local radio stations and the

presenters we support with CDs and copies of our magazine usually have their programmes carried by several stations, thus giving them large catchment areas.

For instance, **David Lowe** who broadcasts in the West Country is heard on seven stations from Gloucestershire to the Channel Islands. His "As Time Goes By" show featuring music from the 1930s, 1940s and 50s on Saturday evenings between 8pm and 10pm is followed at the same time on Sundays by his "Swingers & Singers" programme. This is described as a weekly celebration of the greatest songwriters, recording stars and big bands. Both shows give David plenty of opportunity to play Bing and he does not let us down. Since our last issue was prepared he has played 17 Bing tracks varying from "Shepherd Serenade" to "Softly as in a Morning Sunrise". You can catch David on the Internet via <http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/devon/hi/>

Similarly, our old friend, **Paul Barnes**, too has his late night show (appropriately entitled "The Late Paul Barnes") carried by seven BBC stations and as usual he has kept Bing alive for us. He always mentions the Crosby Calendar picture on his first show of every month and plays the accompanying song. The song "What Am I Gonna Do About You" was used as part of his Les Paul tribute. You can find Paul Barnes at Radio Norfolk, web page
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/norfolk/hi/>. There is a listen again option for 7 days after each broadcast. One of Paul's Norfolk colleagues – **Richard Spendlove** – surprised us on October 10 with a nice tribute to Bing. Richard played "Swinging on a Star", "Sweet Georgia Brown", "How Deep is the Ocean", "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" in memory of the anniversary of Bing's passing.

BBC Radio Wales has two shows which regularly feature Bing. **Dewi Griffiths** transports us back to the golden years of entertainment with Sunday morning's *A String of Pearls* whilst **Beverly Humphreys** brings us the classics from the shows every Saturday in *Showtime* at 10:00 PM. BBC Wales can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/radiowales/.

Further north at Radio Cumbria, **Anne Hopper** continues her magnificent efforts to play Bing songs. No less than 35 tracks by our man were featured by Anne from June to October including a "Four of a Kind" requested by our hard working member Trevor Wagstaff. Anne played "Deep in the Heart of Texas" on two separate occasions when it was requested again by a listener who could not believe this had been banned by the Beeb. Aware that our Leeds meeting was taking place on October 4, Anne arranged a telephone interview with Ron Field and your editor which was broadcast on the day itself. I was able to mention the imminent Mosaic set of Buddy Cole tracks and Ron and I were then pressed to name our favourite Bing songs. Ron chose "Down by the River" whilst I picked "You Don't Know What Lonesome Is" from the latest Sepia issue. Anne needs requests to support her Bing choices so do please email her at anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk with Crosby songs you would like to hear. Anne is the deserved winner of the *Bing on the Box* award again this time.

Bill Rennells also has a request programme called

Harmony Nights which is heard throughout the South East of England late on Sunday evenings. Bill is always eager to please and email him at bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk with your wishes. Bill has played 28 Bing songs including the rarely heard "For Want of a Nail" during the period under review. ICC stalwarts Stan White and Trevor Wagstaff frequently have requests played by Bill and these included "Once in a While" for Trevor to commemorate the anniversary of Bing's death.

Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** (www.bbc.co.uk/lincolnshire/local_radio/) has a Sunday afternoon show and the provision of several Jonzo CDs by Stan White encouraged Howard to play a number of Bing tracks from them. **Mike Carey** on BBC Radio Derby gave the ICC a very nice plug on his Sunday afternoon *Memorable Melodies* show when he played "So Do I" from a 1936 KMH show. Mike also interviewed Ken Crossland about the new Perry Como book and naturally Ken got a few mentions of Bing into the programme as well. There is a listen again feature which can be found at:

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p001d743.

Jim Reilly continues to broadcast for Angel Radio which provides a full radio service 24-7 specifically for persons aged 60 and over who live in the Borough of Havant in Hampshire. Some months ago he did a series of eleven one hour programmes entitled "The Lesser Known Crosby". These contained a total of 156 Bing titles. The programmes went out on Tuesday evenings and were well received by the listeners. Jim is working on a follow up series entitled "The Better Known Crosby". Angel Radio won The Queens Award for Voluntary Service in June. The station can be heard on the Internet – go to www.angelradio.moonfruit.com/.

Australia & New Zealand

TCM in Australia showed "Inside the Dream Factory" – a 1995 TV documentary on July 4. This had a young Bing singing "Going Hollywood".

Turning to radio, there are a number of broadcasters on Community Radio stations featuring Bing and our own **Graham Pascoe** is one of these. For two hours every Monday, Graham jumps into the studio at 2MCE-FM to play some of the best swing, big band and Bing tracks. Also, we must not forget Bob Neate and Ken Boness who present a show on behalf of the **Australian Bing Crosby Society** on Radio Eastern FM 98.1 on Tuesday mornings between 11:00am and noon. Well done, chaps!

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Les Paul, the American jazz guitarist and inventor, died of complications from pneumonia on August 13. He was 94. Les was a pioneer in the development of the solid-body electric guitar which helped make the sound of rock and roll possible. His many recording innovations included overdubbing, delay effects such as

"sound on sound" and tape delay, phasing effects, and multitrack recording. He was born Lester William Polfuss, in Waukesha, Wisconsin, on June 9, 1915. Even as a child he showed an aptitude for tinkering, taking apart electric appliances to see what made them tick.

Les Paul began performing publicly at the age of 13, and dropped out of school at 17 to join Sunny Joe Wolverton's Radio Band in St Louis. His first recordings were made under the name Rhubarb Red, a name given to him by Wolverton, on an acoustic guitar in 1936. In 1938, Paul moved to New York as part of a trio that included Jim Atkins (older half-brother of guitarist Chet Atkins) and bassist/percussionist Ernie Newton. They landed a featured spot with *Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians* radio show. Paul moved to Hollywood in 1943, where he formed a new trio. As a last-minute replacement for Oscar Moore, Paul played with Nat King Cole and other artists in the inaugural Jazz at the Philharmonic concert in Los Angeles on July 2, 1944.

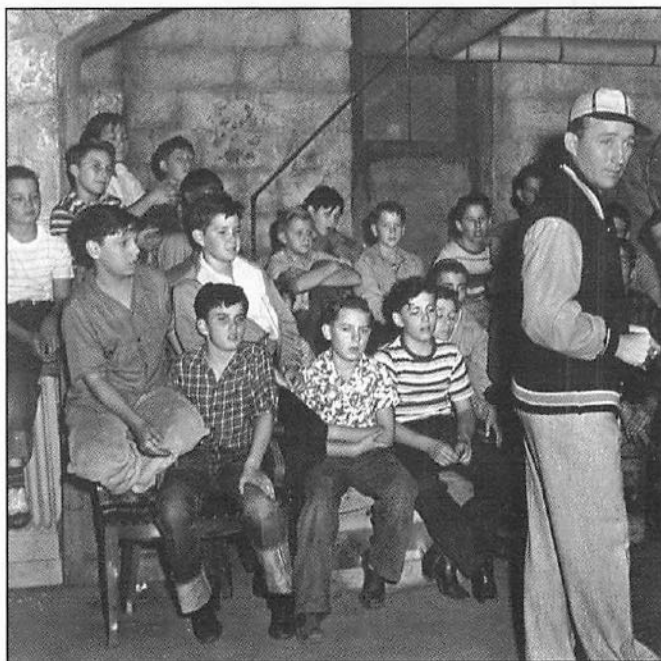


Les Paul with Mary Ford.

Les first appeared with Bing on a *Mail Call* show broadcast on February 16, 1944 and following another *Mail Call* show with Bing, he was invited to guest on the *Kraft Music Hall* of December 28, 1944. He appeared on several more of Bing's radio shows over the next 7 years as well as supporting Bing on a number of recordings. In July 1945, Les and his trio accompanied Bing on the recording of "It's Been a Long, Long Time" which went to the top of the charts in 1945. Paul credited Bing for teaching him about timing, phrasing and preparation. Crosby "didn't say it, he did it—one time only. Unless he blew the lyrics, he did one take." In 1948, Paul was nearly killed in a car crash, which shattered his right arm and elbow. This, of course, also

threatened his career as a guitar player, until he convinced doctors to set his badly broken arm in the playing position. While recovering from the accident, Bing gave him a first generation Ampex tape recorder. Always keen to experiment, he added a fourth head to the recorder to allow multi-track recording, and at the same time also invented tape delay (an audio effect reminiscent of an echo). In the early 1950s, with his then-wife, Mary Ford, he had nine top 10 hits with songs such as "How High the Moon" and "Vaya Con Dios." His guitar style, heavily influenced by jazzman Django Reinhardt, featured lightning-quick runs and double-time rhythms.

However it is likely that Les Paul will be best remembered for the Gibson Les Paul, a variation on the solid-body guitar he built in the early 1940s. He had called his first solid-body guitar "the Log." It was made of a four-inch-thick piece of wood from a nearby railroad track, a neck he borrowed from an Epiphone guitar and two pickups to give it the electric pulse. Paul was offered an updated version by the Gibson Guitar Corporation and Les agreed to have his name attached to it in 1952. Les Paul continued playing at clubs into his 90s despite being hampered by arthritis. He is enshrined in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Grammy Hall of Fame, the Inventors Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Until recently he had a standing gig at New York's Iridium Jazz Club, where he would play with a who's-who of famed musicians.

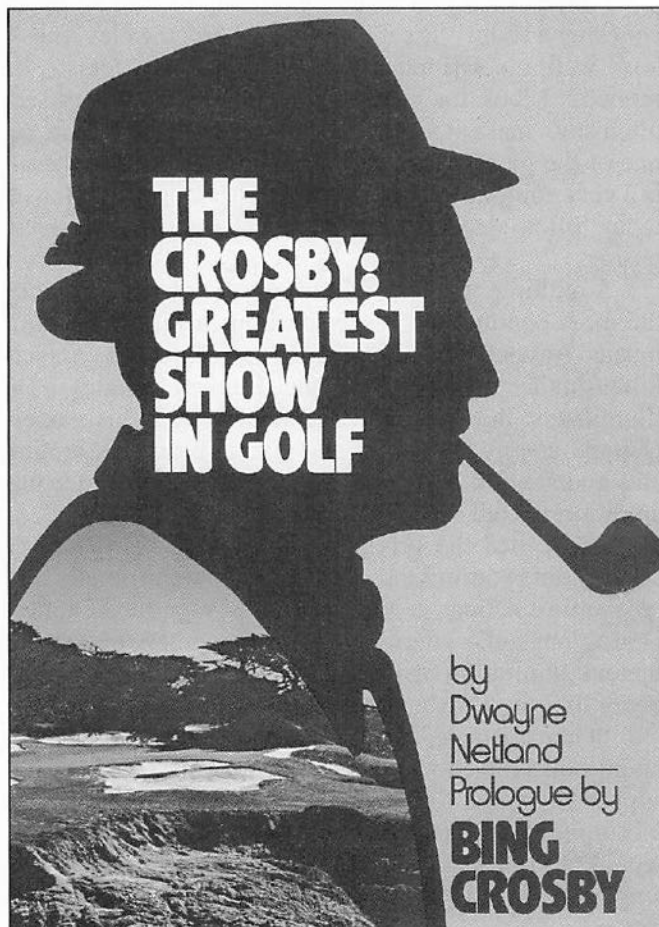


Father O'Malley leads the Bob Mitchell Boys Choir in song.

Bob Mitchell, organist and founder of the Robert Mitchell Boys Choir died on July 4 at the age of 96. In 1924, when still only 12, Bob started playing organ accompaniment to silent films, beginning a passion for silent cinema music that would last a lifetime. When "talkies" ushered out the era of silent pictures, Mitchell made a successful career change to other burgeoning media. Throughout the 30s he was staff organist at various times for radio stations KMTR, KEME, KHJ

and from 1940 to 1965 at KFI radio. In 1934, shortly after being appointed organist of St. Brendan's Church, Los Angeles, Mitchell organized a boy's choir, The Robert Mitchell Boys Choir, also known as the St. Brendan's Church Choir or Bob Mitchell's Singing Boys. Ideally located in Los Angeles, they were cast in over 100 films in the Musical era from the 1930s through the end of the 1960s. Their most notable appearances were probably *Going My Way* (1944) with Bing, *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938) with James Cagney, *The Jolson Story* (1946) and the Christmas classic, *The Bishop's Wife* (1947). The choir also took part in Bing's first TV appearance in December 1948 when he sang "Silent Night" with them. That same month, the choir played a prominent part in Bing's Philco Show broadcast on December 22. Bob Mitchell's works with the boys choir also garnered him several illustrious honors including a Silver Medal from Princess Grace of Monaco, the "Pro Papa et Ecclesia" Certificate from Pope John-Paul the Second and a Silver Beaver Medal from the Boy Scouts of America. He was still performing as an organist until a few weeks before his death.

Dwayne Netland, a longtime golf writer and former managing editor of the Arizona Golf Association's publication *Arizona, The State of Golf*, died June 30. He was 77. Netland's career included 18 years at the *Minneapolis Tribune*, where he served as golf editor, and 23 years at *Golf Digest*, starting in 1974.



His writing credits include "The Crosby: Greatest Show in Golf," with Bing; and the *New York Times* best-seller "Bob Hope's Confessions of a Hooker." The Crosby book was of course the one that Bing took on to the

Tonight Show on October 15, 1975 intending to present it to Johnny Carson but found Don Rickles deputising as host. This led Bing to say, 'I thought Mr. Carson would be here, but I'll have to take what I've got.'

Sam Hinton, the folksinger and harmonica player died on September 10 at the age of 92. In 1937 Sam joined the Major Bowes Transcontinental Revue, and in the decades since then he entertained audiences around the world with his music and good humor. He was also a marine biologist, author, calligrapher and cartoonist. But for a generation of children in the '60s, he was that folk singer with an incredible mouthful of songs. As an educator he regularly taught University of California courses for more than 35 years, and spent 16 years as Director of Relations with Schools for the University of California, San Diego. His link with Bing is of course the album "How The West Was Won" to which he contributed several songs although he did not actually sing with Bing.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord's regular look at some of the many celebrities he has interviewed over the years who had a connection with Bing.

Tony Bennett's name is synonymous with class and quality. His musical standards are beyond reproach—his repertoire is as tasteful as vintage wine.

I once asked him what ingredients he looked for in choosing a song: "It's the craftsmanship, the cleverness, how well it's written, how vital the song feels," he replied. "I look for incongruous melodies. Advertisers often say, 'make it simple and not complicated', and yet one of the most beautiful ballads ever written, *Stardust*, is a very complicated melody in its structure. Pop music today often deals in 'lead' and I'm in the 'silver' business."

A multiple winner of Grammy awards, he is one of the most popular and respected figures in the world of music. Anyone who has attended one of his concerts has fallen under the spell of the Bennett magic. He illuminates theatres and nightclubs with his super-charged energy. His phrasing is matchless, his diction and enunciation flawless. His choice of material has always reflected his poetic taste.

I have had the privilege of being in his company several times during the past 50 years with friendly and enjoyable meetings in New York, Las Vegas and Ottawa. During our radio interviews we always reflected on our mutual admiration of Bing and our shared memories of being lifelong Crosby fans.

"I had an uncle," he told me, "who was a dancer and he introduced me to Bing's records. Every evening after supper we would listen to the Rhythm Boys. He would pick up the carpet in our apartment, push it aside so there would be a nice wooden floor and tap dance to Bing's singing. Then I became more and more interested in music.

"Because of Crosby's style and relaxed manner, he made it seem effortless. He made everything look easy. He actually moulded American music of his time and influenced all of us to top quality. He was a complete

genius when it comes to music. I don't kick that word around. I know in show business everybody uses the word 'genius' about almost anything but I mean it in the academic sense.

"He contributed more to American music than any other one single person. I have loved every second of everything that he's ever done, especially his collaborations with Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong. All those beautiful movies and records he made. They are works of art. America has one culture and its jazz and that's how Bing made it being originally a Rhythm Boy and then singing with Louis Armstrong.

"Every singer in the business has kind of imitated certain things of Bing, actually taken certain things from him. Some guys took his golf clubs, other guys took his pipes, other guys took his stool to sit on and relax; everybody has a Bing Crosby idiosyncrasy. I was influenced by his collaboration with different jazz artists. It's made my career very worthwhile and fruitful as a result of taking that approach."



Tony Bennett and Gord discuss Bing

When I played my taped Bennett interview for Bing he was flattered by Tony's laudatory comments, but sceptical about his own connection to jazz. "Oh, I don't know how he got that idea," he said slightly embarrassed, "I wasn't a well known jazz singer. Of course, I like that kind of music, I was happy when I got to record some of those songs and had the opportunity to work with some wonderful musicians, like the Dorsey brothers and Woody Herman, Goodman, Miller and some jazz bands too. I worked with Beiderbecke, Red Nichols and Trumbauer, practically all of the great musicians. If I have any ability as a jazz singer, it runs off me from them, you know."

That response to Tony's glowing words was typical of Bing's sincere, modest nature.

Anthony Dominick Benedetto was born August 3, 1926 in Astoria, New York. His father was a tailor from Calabria who out of necessity opened a grocery store. He recognized early his son's natural singing voice and encouraged him to pursue music. His dad died at a relatively young age, and his mother worked as a seamstress, while his sister Mary looked after the household chores. While attending high school, where he studied industrial art in hopes of becoming a

commercial artist, Bennett supplemented his family's income with weekend singing engagements.

Shortly after he graduated from high school he was inducted into the army, and spent the last three months of World War II in Europe. As an infantryman he witnessed the devastation of Europe, which formed his social conscience. In his 1998 autobiography, *The Good Life*, he reveals the anguish and pain that still haunts him from the time he served in action. It is the most powerful chapter in his book. His heartfelt plea for the end of war and for global peace is a reflection of his universal outlook and acceptance. "Audiences all over the world" he insists, "respond in a similar way to the joy and emotion of popular music."

One of the famous winners on Arthur Godfrey's well remembered *Talent Scouts* program, Tony, in a competition among all winners for one year, placed second to Rosemary Clooney. Recalling the song he featured that night, the old standard, *I May Be Wrong*, he said with good humour, "The title couldn't have been more appropriate, I sure was wrong – Rosie was great and she won!"

It was a series of appearances at Greenwich Village clubs that proved to be the turning point in his career. Critical acclaim brought him to the attention, first of Pearl Bailey, and then Bob Hope, who invited him to join his cast for an engagement at Manhattan's Paramount Theatre. A Columbia recording contract followed a short time later.

The first Bennett hit was the torchy lament, *The Boulevard of Broken Dreams*, followed by *Cold, Cold Heart*, *Because of You* and *Rags to Riches*. An impressive number of his recordings have become all time favourites. His personal musical crusade has been, in his own words, "to keep alive the songs of the great classic popular composers, while at the same time introducing ballads by promising new composers." He

has also been widely acclaimed as an artist with brush and pallet. His landscape paintings have sold for considerable sums of money and his works have been displayed in prominent galleries.

The ballad that became his biggest hit and his signature song was released at the height of Beatlemania. "It was 1963," he remembered fondly, "and the charts were dominated by rock 'n' roll, and this beautiful melody became the hit of the year."

At first he didn't recognize the potential of his most requested song, *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*. "My music director, Ralph Sharon, who has found almost all of my songs over the years, brought this lovely anthem to 'The City by the Bay' to my attention. We were going to San Francisco and I thought it would be a great song to feature at the Fairmont Hotel. We auditioned it while we were completing an engagement in Hot Springs, Arkansas. One of the bartenders at our hotel overheard our rehearsal and said to me, 'Tony, if you record that song I'll go out and buy a copy'. It only proves," he said with a chuckle, "that you should always listen to the advice of your friendly bartender!"

The strain of constant touring ended both of his marriages in divorce. He has, however, been a close and caring father to his two sons and two daughters. His eldest child, Danny, who is his personal manager, was successful in broadening his dad's generational appeal with radio and TV exposure to younger audiences.

In his autobiography Tony refers to himself as a "singer in the tradition of Bing Crosby and in the manner of Frank Sinatra." Both late, great stars admired him for his demeanour and his artistry. Sinatra once acclaimed him as "the best singer in the business" and Bing, during one of our interviews, praised him as a "singer's singer and a shining talent."

Gord Atkinson

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases



COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby: Through The Years - Vol 4 1952-53 Sepia Records 1139 UK £6.50

1. On The 10:10 from Ten-Ten-Tennessee (with Ben Lessy)
2. Zing A Little Zong (with Jane Wyman)
3. The Moon Came Up With A Great Idea Last Night
4. Watermelon Weather (3 & 4 with Peggy Lee)
5. You Don't Know What Lonesome Is
6. Open Up Your Heart
7. To See You Is To Love You
8. Hoot Mon
9. Chicago Style
10. The Road To Bali (8, 9, & 10 with Bob Hope)
11. The Merry-Go-Run-Around (with Bob Hope & Peggy Lee)
12. South Rampart St Parade
13. Cool Water (12 & 13 with The Andrews Sisters)
14. Fatherly Advice (with Gary Crosby)
15. Sleigh Ride
16. I Love My Baby
17. Little Jack Frost Get Lost (with Peggy Lee)
18. That's A Plenty (with Connee Boswell)
19. Keep It A Secret
20. Sleigh Bell Serenade
21. Mother Darlin'
22. Hush-A-Bye
23. There's Music In You
24. Ohio
25. The Magic Window (L7043)
26. A Quiet Girl

It seems to be barely minutes since we were lamenting the demise of

the Jonzo series of Chronologicals, just when they had reached the dawn of the Fifties, with so much unexplored Crosby material, at least from a CD perspective, under threat. Fortunately, Richard Tay at Sepia Records stepped in to save the day and here we have Volume 4 of the continuation series and what a gem it is. With so much duet material included, it could almost pass as a duets album, but my track selection finger inevitably takes me to titles such as "Mother Darlin'" and "Hush-A-Bye" and others that were almost unfindable in my early days of collecting in the Sixties. And what a track to end with; "A Quiet Girl" has always been a personal favourite with a beautifully controlled and mellow Crosby vocal. With three tracks new to CD, an informative booklet by Malcolm and good sound quality (most tracks are sourced from 78s, so a bit of hiss is sadly inevitable), the set is a must for any ICC member.

A full review of the Mosaic set will appear in the next issue, and with Volume 5 of 'Through The Years' already in preparation, these are great times for devotees of the Fifties Bing, none more so than myself.

As Christmas hurtles towards us once more, we have the usual plethora of festive season compilations and reissues coming our way. One that particularly stands out is this.

Christmas Is A-Comin'

Spectrum SPECX102 UK £4.50



1. It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas
2. White Christmas
3. Silent Night
4. Adeste Fideles
5. Twelve Days of Christmas (with The Andrews Sisters)
6. The Christmas Song
7. Jingle Bells (with The Andrews Sisters)
8. Christmas Is A-Comin'
9. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
10. Here Comes Santa Claus (with The Andrews Sisters)
11. Is Christmas Only A Tree
12. Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
13. The First Noel
14. I'll Be Home For Christmas
15. Silver Bells (with Carole Richards)
16. O Fir Tree Dark
17. Christmas in Killarney
18. You're All I Want for Christmas
19. Mele Kalikimaka (with The Andrews Sisters)
20. I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
21. Snow (with Peggy Lee, Danny Kaye & Trudy Stevens)
22. Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town (with The Andrews Sisters)
23. That Christmas Feeling
24. Let's Start The New Year Right
25. Auld Lang Syne

It's amazing what a new cover can do! At first sight, this looks like a new compilation but in fact is a re-run of a similarly titled CD that appeared on the Music Club label in 2001. It's very welcome, nonetheless, containing an interesting mixture of Bing's Christmas output, including

several duets with the Andrews girls and a handful of titles that we will see again in the 'Through The Years' series. And it contains the only Christmas song that I can listen to at any time of the year; "Silver Bells" is such a wonderful example of how a duet should be sung that I can listen to it anytime, anywhere.

Do you remember the days when we used to buy EPs? In this age of downloads, we can of course have any format we choose, but I was struck by this EP-like packaging of five Christmas songs that Capitol Records is offering as mp3 downloads, complete with EP-like sleeve too.

Merry Christmas From Bing Crosby

Capitol Records

download

\$0.99 per track

1. Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow
2. Frosty The Snowman
3. The Little Drummer Boy
4. Winter Wonderland
5. Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas

Arguably the five most popular songs from Bing's 1962 "I Wish You A Merry Christmas" album, although most of us will have them several times over.

A postscript before I move on to look at new talking picture releases. I cast doubts last time out as to whether Bing and Satchmo were together in the studio for their 1960 album, despite the testimony of Billy May that they were. ICC member Stan White also recalls Buddy Cole telling him that he had been present too and seen Bing and Louis together. Malcolm and I took up the question with Will Friedwald and Gary Giddins and the plot thickens. Gary, in his reply to Malcolm, said that he understood that a tape had been found in Bing's basement that contained Bing's vocals but not Louis's, suggesting that they may have been together for one session but not all of them. Gary went on to say that he was hoping to get copies of the original masters to clear things up once and for all. Watch this space!

DVD

White Christmas (Anniversary Edition)

Paramount

USA (Region 1)

\$14.99

Many of us in the UK were fortunate enough to see a gloriously restored copy of "White Christmas" in our cinemas

last year. Now, to mark the 55th anniversary of the film's release, Paramount is offering a two-DVD Anniversary Edition on DVD. Disc 2 offers an array of extras, some of which have been available before (including Rosemary Clooney's commentary) but many are new including:

Bing Crosby: Christmas Crooner - members of Bing's family offers personal memories of the film and discuss Bing's Yuletide connections. There is also film of a visit to Bing's hometown of Spokane.

Danny Kaye: Joy To The World - a tribute to the perennial court jester including a look at his work for UNICEF

Rosemary's Old Kentucky Home - a tour of Rosie's roots

Backstage Stories from White Christmas

Irving Berlin's White Christmas - a look at how the composer came to write the famous song.

Sadly, if reviewers on the web are to be believed, the set does not include the sparkling picture quality that some of us saw last year. Paramount it seems, have stuck with the unrestored version used in previous releases which most reviewers seem to find a rather dark and dull print. Worth it for the extras though.

Road to Lebanon

Synergy Ent

USA (All Regions)

\$9.99

There's never a shortage of reissues of "Road" films but this is a little different. It's not one of the original series of course, it being a Danny Thomas TV show from 1966. Here's the press release that describes it.

"Bing Crosby is scouting locations in Beirut to do another road picture—without his partner, Bob Hope! When he runs into Danny Thomas, who is judging a local beauty contest, Bing and Danny are kidnapped by a sheik who is out to punish Thomas because one of his ancestors committed the sin of getting a nose job. Many musical numbers, live camels and even Bob Hope himself add to the fun in this TV rarity. Originally aired April 20, 1960 (sic –it was 1966 not 1960)."

You may also spot "**Bing Crosby's White Christmas All Star USO Show**", but beware. It's not what the title implies. Here's how one online reviewer describes it:

"The packaging gives you the feeling that this is a Bing Crosby special with a boat load of guests. It's really a USO pieced together show for troops stationed around the world and Bing is simply one of the performers. Don't get me wrong, there are some great little rare nuggets in this DVD like Dick Shawn and a strange singing trio with Jimmie Rodgers, "for the kids". But overall the picture and sound quality is fair and I get the feeling at one point there was more to the show, since some performers only show at the end of the program singing a Christmas carol in mass and do not have a featured spot in the show. From the references made by some of the performers in the show, I believe this was produced for Christmas 1958."

What's On The Web?

The most interesting auction item this last quarter was a photo album seemingly rescued from the fire that destroyed Bing's Hollywood home in 1943. According to the seller, the album was rescued from the post-fire trash by a contractor working on the site. It contained 17 family photographs of Bing's first family. Winning bid? \$1000.

Mention "tweets" and most Crosby fans would probably reach for their copy of "Mr Meadowlark" but in the parlance of digital age cyberspace, a "tweet" is now the name for a short message posted on the social networking site "Twitter". The idea - which works very well - is that people put short (one/two sentence) messages on the site, answering the question "What are you doing now?" Most posts however go beyond that brief and President Obama apparently used Twitter to announce his Vice-Presidential choice. Now the Crosby family have created a Bing Crosby presence on the site with a daily post, picking something that Bing was doing on that particular date (and doubtless drawing the date from a certain Day By Day book!). Just looking at the week in October when this is being written, here are some of the posts:

Oct 12, 1977: Bing Crosby receives an invitation from First Lady Rosalynn Carter to perform at a White House Christmas Party on Dec 17.

Oct 13, 1957: The Emmy-nominated Bing Crosby hosted "The Edsel Show" airs on CBS with guests Frank Sinatra, Rosie Clooney, & Louis Armstrong

Oct 18, 1926: Bing Crosby & Al Rinker record "I've Got the Girl", without label credit, in LA - but Bing, years later, says that it was them.

Poignantly, there is no post for October 14.

And that's it for now. Have a great Christmas and New Year.

Belting the Tequila Around

Back in BING #143, Jon Oye told us about some of the products Bing had become involved with on the advertising front. Martin McQuade has been doing further research and he shares it with us now.

Sometimes my thoughts may find me in Mexico, drinkin' tequila, goin' out of my mind. (Lyric from *The Straight Life* by Bobby Goldsboro, recorded by Bing Crosby in 1968)

This wasn't just an idle reverie for Bing Crosby. Research has indicated that in the late forties Crosby and Phil Harris were on vacation in Mexico where they were enticed by a particular brand of Tequila served at the Agua Caliente in Tijuana. Rita Hayworth danced at this resort which attracted many Hollywood stars such as Errol Flynn, Clark Gable, and Bob Hope; principally because it offered Herradura, 92 proof 100% blue agave tequila which for many years was the only pure variety known to exist.

In his autobiography *Call Me Lucky*, Crosby recalled that his acquaintance with this Mexicali watering hole dated back to the Coconut Grove days when it was a prohibition-era haven. *With the coming of fame, we became regular callers at Agua Caliente. Since we had Sunday and Mondays off we'd go there occasionally for a week end. What with driving about one hundred and fifty miles each way and playing roulette, golf, and belting a little tequila around, come Tuesday, when I stood or swayed in front of a microphone, my pipes were shot.*

Since fortuity, especially where horses are concerned, was a Crosby creed, Herradura must have held an added appeal since it means horseshoe in Spanish. The motto for the company, founded in 1870, is *Tequila Herradura and the unique ingredient of fortune*. A promotional booklet mentions that *everyone knows that a horseshoe is both a hand – crafted necessity for the serious rider and a symbol of luck.*



Bing and Phil promote their Tequila brand

The only tequila available to post war Gringos was known as 51% mixto. Crosby and Harris addressed this lamentable shortfall by arranging to bring limited supplies of Herradura into the United States for their associates and friends (perhaps with the suggestion of a Minute Maid chaser). Word of many highly satisfied mouths dictated that a corporate arrangement be made. As stated in the company's official record, *in 1955 Hollywood celebrities Bing Crosby and Phil Harris developed an importation business to bring Tequila Herradura to the U.S. Market*. Public relations manager David Page told me that *we are very proud to have Bing Crosby as part of our history*.

For many years thereafter Herradura was the only unadulterated tequila available north of the border and the Crosby and Harris business the only distributor. In March 1975 the wandering minstrels signed an expanded contract with Herradura, ceding a measure of control when they agreed to a unique clause guaranteeing Herradura the right to bottle the beverage, rather than exporting it in bulk. They also consented to make a television commercial as part of a marketing campaign to make this pure high octane Tequila a staple of any well stocked American bar. They succeeded, and in the process lured many a reveler to temporarily *leave the straight life behind*. For more information on Herradura, now owned and imported by Brown - Forman, visit www.herradura.com

Footnote: Crosby was a connoisseur of another Latin libation. While on the road to Havana, Cuba with Bob Hope in the 1950's, he visited the Bacardi Rum Executive Bar. They became so enamored of the Puerto Rican spirit that they consented to become company spokesmen, presumably filing the Bacardi coffers with Yankee dollars.

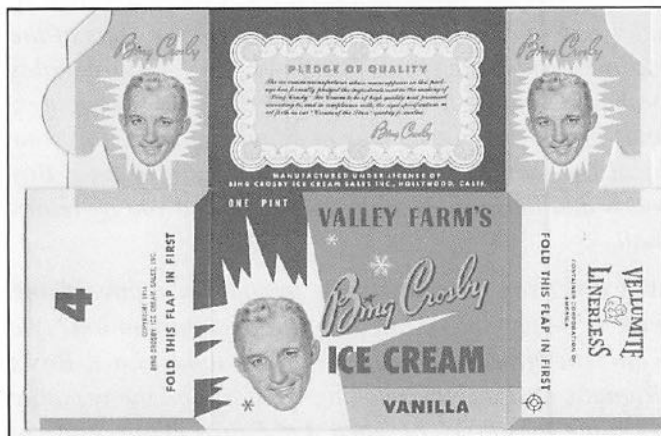
A More Benign Refreshment

In 1953 Bing Crosby Ice Cream was launched. This product was manufactured and distributed by various companies such as Valley or Royal Crest Farms, *under license of Bing Crosby Ice Cream Sales, Inc., Hollywood, California*. This wasn't Crosby's first association with the dessert. His face appeared eleven times on the famous series of Dixie Cup Ice Cream picture lids which appeared throughout America from 1930 to 1954.

Each container of Bing Crosby Ice Cream bore a *Pledge of Quality*. *The ice cream manufacturer whose name appears on this package has formally pledged the ingredients used in the making of "Bing Crosby" Ice Cream to be of high quality and processed according to, and in compliance with, the rigid specifications as set forth in our "Cream of the Stars" quality formulae. Signed, Bing Crosby*

This appetite-whetting assurance is quite frustrating since we may never experience the taste of this treat. It

is highly unlikely that anyone has cryogenically preserved it to these many decades; and it might be a daunting task to locate the *quality formulae*. Still, one can capture the cultural flavor of this confection from the charming period snapshot which appeared in the January 9, 1954 issue of *Boxoffice Magazine*.



Promotion of 'Little Boy Lost' Worked Out With Bing Crosby Ice Cream Company

A tie in with a local ice cream distributor resulted in widespread publicity for "Little Boy Lost" at RKO Keith's in Dayton, Ohio. Manager Ansell Winston worked out many stunts with Royal Crest Farms, purveyor of Bing Crosby Ice Cream. Posters for delivery trucks, bumper strips for employee cars and lapel badges worn by delivery and dairy personnel carried credits for the picture. Posters were provided for the 100 dealers in town and autographed Bing Crosby photos were presented to purchasers of the ice cream. Bing Crosby Ice Cream was delivered to disc jockeys in town with an invitation to see the picture and a request they feature Bing Crosby records during the run.

Royal Crest purchased radio spots, conducted a sample distribution and ran a co-op newspaper ad. Rany Daly of WHIO made tape recordings of patron interviews for broadcast during the playdate and the Arthur Godfrey TV Show, sponsored locally by Royal Crest, gave theater credits and the ice cream plug.

20,000 coupons were distributed at the theater, each one good for part payment of two pints of Crosby Ice Cream at any of the local dealers. Five cups of ice cream were given to anyone attending Saturday and Sunday afternoon shows. An ice cream freezer in the lobby had appropriately dressed models as attendants in a lobby setpiece called attention to the giveaway. Window streamers in record store windows promoted Bing Crosby ice cream, his records, and the picture. Royal Crest purchased tickets to the film at a discount to give to their dealers. Special tie – in art from Bing Crosby Institute was serviced to papers as an item in the promotion.

It may be assumed that this marketing stratagem coordinated by Bing Crosby Institute (an entity new to me) was replicated at other venues across the country

screening *Little Boy Lost*, one of the top hits of 1953, raking in three million dollars in United States ticket sales alone. Many a theater floor must have been littered with scraped out cups and thoroughly licked lids of Bing Crosby Ice Cream.

Dad's Chair

Lazy - Lazy Day - Lazy Bones - Lazy River: these Bing Crosby chestnuts helped mold his enduring casual image. Just as he was introducing his talents to the world, another proponent of easy living came upon the scene. Introduced in 1928, the innovative La-Z-Boy reclining chair offered something new to the sedentary life. Now a chair was a partner, moving in conformity with the body. In 1947, as Americans began to take their leisure time seriously, La-Z-Boy initiated a series of ads showing customers relaxing in their recliners. An essential fixture of suburban culture was established. By 1966 the advertising budget skyrocketed in excess of \$500,000 dollars.

In 1967 La-Z-Boy changed its advertising approach and decided to feature for the first time a celebrity spokesman. Crosby was an ideal candidate since the company was becoming known as the manufacturer of *Dad's chair*. He consented to a year long contract for participation in a national publicity campaign which entailed the furnishing of his Hillsborough estate with the *Reclina-Rocker*, the first reclining rocking chair. A camera crew visited the home to photograph the Crosby's in their cozy splendor.

Judy Carr, resident historian for the company, has graciously shared with me this letter, dated March 1, 1967, which Moritz Brueckner, vice president of sales, sent to Hillsborough.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. H. Crosby

We want you to know that the chairs ordered for your home and ranch are in process and should be on their way in about two weeks.

I want to take this opportunity to express our thanks to you for letting us upset your home for two days. Not only did you make us feel at home, your warm cooperation and hospitality made a real pleasurable experience, out of what unfortunately, in most instances today, is purely mechanical.

The pictures "turned out" beautifully and we're sure you'll be just as pleased as we are with them.

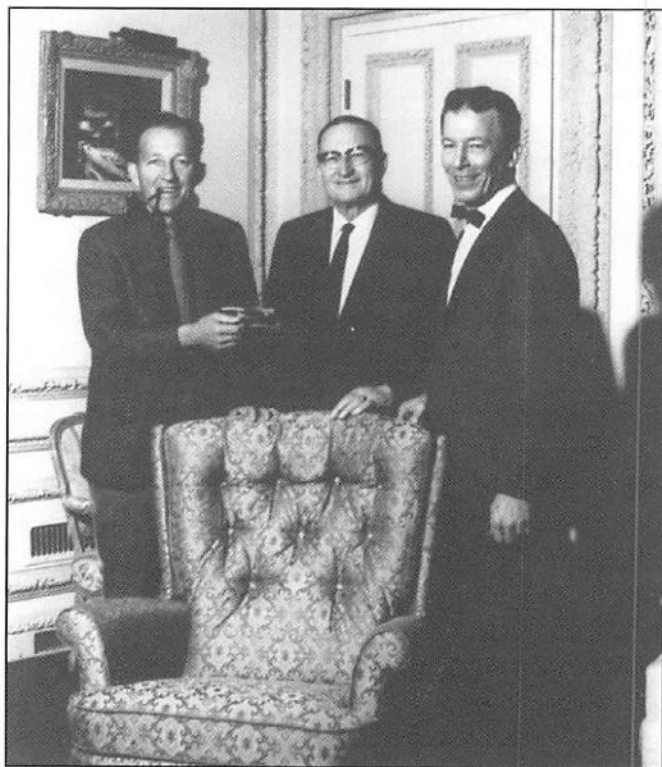
Best personal regards,

La-z-Boy Chair Company,

Moritz F. Brueckner

Vice President, Sales

After the arrival of the chairs, Mr. Brueckner visited Hillsborough with Edward Knabusch, who co-founded La-Z-Boy with Edwin Shoemaker. They posed with Crosby alongside one of the recliners.



**Bing with Messrs. Brueckner and Knabush
and a recliner.**

Mr. Relaxation himself also agreed to record a special appeal for distribution to the authorized dealers to help them swing like a pro and hit a high note in sales.

Hello there. This is your old friend Bing Crosby. I'm cutting a new kind of a record. It's called "Join the Chorus." If you fellas don't mind I'll sing the melody. This one isn't meant to sell a million copies. It's meant to help you set a record of your own: a record sales season with La-Z-Boy Reclina Rockers and Lazy Loungers. Kathryn and I have our own La-Z-Boy chairs and know about the genuine relaxing comfort and incomparable styling. We really enjoy them.

I'm supposed to be a guy who's a specialist in relaxing but, well, I wanted to know a little about the organization itself. And I found out that it's a solid, progressive company with a long history of integrity. La-Z-Boy chairs have carried a full lifetime warranty on the reclining mechanisms since the original design. And that's quite a ways back. In fact, that's way back in the day's of Old Dad's flaming youth. It's a real pleasure to work with a company like La-Z-Boy. It makes your selling job easier to know that every La-Z-Boy chair is backed with a meaningful warranty. La-Z-Boy has asked me to explain their dynamic "Join the Chorus" advertising program for this year, and believe me, this is something to croon about.

Kathryn and I are going to appear in full color ads featuring several La-Z-Boy styles. Our pictures will be seen in such popular magazines as House Beautiful, House and Gardens, Better Homes and Gardens, American Home, McCall's, Ladies Home Journal and

Good Housekeeping. You know these magazines alone reach over a million people; well, a hundred million people to be quite truthful. But the important fact to remember is that many of these readers are right in your own selling area. I'm working with La-Z-Boy to help you bring these customers into your store; and we've coordinated the advertising with a terrific package of sales aids for you. We got large color blow-ups of the national ads for your windows, in-store sales promotion pieces to place by your La-Z-Boy groupings, and, of course, convenient newspaper mattes for your local use. You just mail the enclosed card to La-Z-Boy today and these sales tools will be sent to you by return mail.

Why don't you plan now to tie in your local advertising with a tremendous La-Z-Boy national promotion? We want the whole world to know about La-Z-Boy's dramatic designs, the relaxing comfort and the versatile reclining positions of each La-Z-Boy chair. And, of course, the final selling job - well, that's up to you. So the more people who are familiar with La-Z-Boy, the easier your selling job is going to be. So 'Join the Chorus.' Send in the enclosed card now for your free Join the Chorus" promotional material. You will find that you'll be making a record of your own with La-Z-Boy and with yours truly, Bing Crosby. Good Selling!

One magazine ad pictures Mr. and Mrs. Crosby seated in matching chairs, smiling contentedly at each other. An endorsement reads, *Man, this is really relaxing...an evening at home with Kathryn in our La-Z-Boy chairs.* A variation on this reads, *La-Z-Boy...A family affair with the Crosby's.* Another shows Bing lounging in front of a blazing fireplace, immersed in a book with pipe clenched between his teeth, claiming *My La-Z-Boy gives me that relaxed feelin' after a game of golf.* Next to this quote is an insert of Bing in cardigan teeing up. Other ads offered a disposable recording of Crosby extolling the product. Life-size cut-aways of him were created for store display. According to Ms. Carr, *that was the classic, conservative image of the company at that time.*

Seasonal patrons received a give-away of an LP entitled *The Songs of Christmas* which was licensed from Decca. The front cover displays a color photo of Bing ensconced in his La-Z-Boy as Kathryn, beaming on the floor beside him, is wrapping gifts. The back has a picture of our star *enjoying the comfort of his La-Z-Boy chair.*

Though other spokespeople succeeded Crosby - Betsy Palmer, Bess Myerson, Ed McMahon, Jim Backus, Joe Namath, Alex Karras, and Paul Harvey - it would be hard to imagine a better merger of pitchman and product than the one which took place that banner year.

* In addition to Judy Carr, Marsha L. Oberleiter of La-Z-Boy marketing was generous in providing

background information, as well as the informative book "The Legend of La-Z-Boy" by Jeffrey L. Rodengen and Richard F. Hubbard.

Martin McQuade

A Bing Crosby Scholarship

Carolyn Schneider has some great news for us.

On October 15th, 2009, my club, Spring Mountain Republican Women held their annual charity fundraiser. As chairperson for this event, I titled it "Swinging on a Star" - a tribute to Bing Crosby.

I'm delighted to report that it was a rousing success both socially and financially. One hundred and thirty people attended. My cousin Howard Crosby was a real crowd pleaser by performing a program of Bing's songs. The evening included wine and hors d'oeuvres, plus a sumptuous buffet supper.

As a result of ticket sales, plus a raffle and a silent auction, enough funds were raised for the club to use a portion of the money to establish a Bing Crosby Scholarship at the Nevada School of the Arts here in Las Vegas. The scholarship is intended to be a yearly merit award, sustained by donations from the club as well as from the public.

I sincerely hope that ICC members are as pleased as I am regarding this very special and singular financial aid offering to music students, in Uncle Bing's name.

Carolyn Schneider

(Editor: Well done, Carolyn and Howard. Just the kind of thing to keep Bing's name alive.)

Arnold Palmer remembers Bing

Ron Field wrote to Arnold Palmer some months ago about his interaction with Bing and received a nice reply as shown below.

Dear Ron:

I am sorry I was not able to respond in a more expeditious manner to your email, but with my 80th birthday celebrations in Florida the weekend of September 4th and more celebrating in Pennsylvania the week of September 10th as well as trying to handle business as usual, I am just now catching up with various forms of correspondence.

To answer your question about my association with Bing Crosby, it lasted for many years. I played golf with him numerous times and attended many functions with him. He was a great guy and a good friend. I really can't give you a lot of information other than the fact that he enjoyed golf, did not like losing on the golf course and continued to play until his death.

Hope you and the Crosbyites had a good time in

Leeds, England at the 44th meeting of the International Club Crosby.

Sincerely,

Arnold Palmer

A review of Country Girl

Another blog - 'Andis Kaulins in China' - on October 23, contained some interesting comments by someone who is obviously not particularly knowledgeable about Bing's career.

What a great movie it was! My choosing to watch it last night justified my decision to eschew most of the current cinema fare, and stick to watching the old classics. *Country Girl*, a movie about alcoholism, spousal loyalty, facing responsibility, and a death of a child, really tugged at my heart strings. And it came to some moral conclusions that are not fashionable these days: we can't use personal tragedy as an excuse for bad behavior, and we really have to stick with the ones we marry through thick and thin. And it also had some great music.

Bing Crosby played a drunk which is something I never imagined him doing. It shows what a shallow impression I had of him. I always knew he was a major singing talent. But even then, there was a bar scene where he sang a gritty, tough, and sensual song in a manner that puts the likes of Mick Jagger to shame. He showed a range that I, ignoramus I am, didn't know he had.

Grace Kelly, who played Crosby's long suffering wife, was superb. Her famous Grace only showed up late in the movie. Till then, she played a forlorn looking wife. I think I read somewhere that she got an Oscar for the performance.

The story and the dialogue were adult and sophisticated, without being vulgar. I couldn't imagine the horrible way that such situations would be treated in a modern movie.

I am glad to be a nerd!

(Editor: Join the club, Andis!)

BING - the social force?

Bob Achorn looks at some interesting recent opinions from two writers.

We have known so much about him, for so long. Bing the singer. Bing the actor (and sometime comedian.) Bing the master of ceremonies. The vaudevillian, the radio star, the film star, later the television star. The man who cut nearly 2,000 records, and saw millions of them sell. The golfer and the fisherman. The rancher. The racing stable owner. The investor in a race track and later a baseball team.

Negatives? Certainly some. Who spends 50 years under the public microscope and reveals no blemishes?

But all in all, the famous entertainer we thoroughly enjoyed and even sometimes called The Voice Known Around the World.

So now comes Bing, the social force? The man who helped bring us through the Great Depression and The War?

Two American writers; Morris Dickstein and David Brooks, have begun to examine those questions.

Dickstein does it in his new cultural history of the United States in the depression years. Brooks finds significance for us all in Bing's response to the end of World War II.

Dickstein devotes only six pages exclusively to Bing in "Dancing in the Dark."* But they are meaningful pages.

Probably Dickstein, a professor at the City College of New York, began his writing paying little if any attention to Crosby. Dickstein was born in 1940. In his teens when he became aware of Bing, he thought his musical work was bland and unengaged.

But the story doesn't end that way.

In his preface, Dickstein recognizes Bing's impact as "the most popular entertainer-of the 1930s." He observes the power of Crosby's rendition of Depression-era songs. As Gary Giddins and others have proposed, he suggests that Bing's understanding of using radio to lift the country's morale equaled that of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the master of "fireside chats" to the nation.

Dickstein credits Giddins and Will Friedwald with leading him to a far better understanding of Crosby's significance. If Giddins and Friedwald find Crosby worthy of rediscovery primarily because of his jazz singing, Dickstein has a broader view, looking not just at the music but at the social and political effect.

The professor is particularly impressed by Bing's recordings of such emotional songs as "Stardust," "Two Cigarettes in the Dark" and "I Apologize." Then "Dancing in the Dark," which provides the title for his history. To describe Bing singing in the '30s, he uses phrases like "master of flowing legato and lyricism," "incomparable," and "perfection." Not all music lovers regard songs of the 1930s as pertinent today, but Dickstein situates them in the era he is writing about, and illuminates their significance,

Above all, there is "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" Dickstein's words: "Few popular standards can boast the emotional complexity of this song, especially in Crosby's full-bodied interpretation."

(Dickstein doesn't mention it, but Rex Weber, the vaudeville performer who first introduced the song on Broadway, spent the rest of his long career trying to persuade audiences that he, not Bing, was the authentic voice of the Depression. His effort was futile.)

As the '30s wore on, Bing was there to raise spirits anew with his performances of hopeful songs: "Pennies from Heaven" and "I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams."

The Depression was far from over, but Americans were beginning to look to a more positive future, and Bing encouraged that belief.

Some fans have argued that his voice and his style were at their finest in late 1938 and early 1939, so the timing was ideal.

And then there was World War II. Bing did much to help there, too, at least on the home front. He traveled to entertain the troops but not as far as Bob Hope, Joe E. Brown, Al Jolson, Noel Coward and other stars did.

David Brooks, a longtime political columnist for *The New York Times*, reminds us of the ultimate victory, with the surrender of Japan. Brooks was listening in 2009 to a 1945 *Command Performance* disc, as played on National Public Radio. These recordings for the troops were all-star productions, and this was no exception. Cary Grant, Marlene Dietrich, Bette Davis and others took part.

The host was Bing Crosby, as was so often the case. The most striking feature of the show was "its tone of self-effacement." That appealed to the conservative Brooks, and he wrote about it in his column.

He quotes Bing as saying "All anybody can do is thank God it's over. Today our deep down feeling is one of humility."

Looking back, Brooks finds that this subdued sentiment was widespread. Among others, The London Times sensed hunger for a public style that was understated, self-abnegating, modest and spare and Brooks adds:

"Bing Crosby expressed it perfectly on *Command Performance*, as Gregory Peck, Dwight Eisenhower and George Marshall would come to express it in public life."

The columnist went on to compare that reaction to the immodesty, egomania and self-indulgent expression he sees dominant in today's pop culture.

It probably should be noted that *Command Performance* and similar recordings were scripted, although there was always room for ad libbing, as the numerous breakups on those discs suggest. In any event, Crosby was at the peak of his power and influence in the mid-'40s. Any script he read would have reflected his views. He was also facile enough to build on whatever words were written for him. The familiar voice, speaking those words in that tone, clearly had an impact on public thought.

The argument that Bing was a major social force needs further exploration and development. But these latest observations suggest something of significance rests in the history of the man and his times.

**Dancing in the Dark, A Cultural History of the Great Depression*, by Morris Dickstein (2009), 600 pages, published by W. W. Norton and Company, New York, London, \$29.95.

Bob Achorn

Bing Crosby
-Hollywood-

January 11, 1967

Dear Louis and Gia:

Kathryn and I are grateful to you for thinking of us at Christmastime.

We appreciate very much the handsome little wooden bucket containing the goodies.

Haven't seen you in too long, Louis, but I certainly keep abreast of your progress and aware of your many successes.

Your old record of "Black Magic" still is among the "First Five" in my top records. What a performance! What an arrangement!

Hope to see you some day soon -

Always yours,



Mr. and Mrs. Louis Prima
279 East Warm Springs Road
Las Vegas, Nevada

THE DAUGHTER OF ROSIE O'GRADY starring June Haver

MOVIE STORY

April • 15 Cents

RIDING HIGH starring
Bing Crosby, Coleen Gray



The exciting
human story
of
"Operation
Vittles"

THE BIG LIFT

starring
Montgomery Clift
Paul Douglas